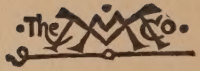
THE CATHOLIC REACTION IN FRANCE



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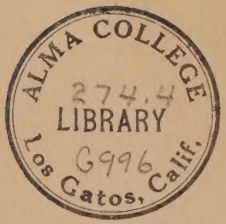
THE CATHOLIC REACTION IN FRANCE

BY
DENIS GWYNN



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INTRODUCTION

THE limitations of this little book are so obvious that an apology for its publication is perhaps more necessary than a warning to those who may read it against regarding it as in any sense authoritative. It would be easy to write many volumes about the Catholic movement in modern France, and no comprehensive account of it, no matter how judiciously it were compiled, could be contained in a single book. Even M. Georges Goyau, with the personal experience of a lifetime spent in the service of the movement, has by no means written his last word about it. On the contrary, his daily articles in the *Figaro,* as its religious correspondent, do not suffice to say anything like all that there is to be said. Obviously, therefore, no foreign journalist, with at best a few years' first-hand acquaintance with life in France, can hope to do more than indicate the main lines of the movement and the probabilities of its future development. But the Catholic movement in France is so full of inspiration and of practical lessons for Catholics in other countries, and represents forces that play so vital a part in the immediate history of France, that the temptation to write of it is strong enough to overcome the many excellent reasons against venturing foolishly.

Having made the attempt, it remains only to leave no false impression in the mind of any one who reads it, as to the status or the qualifications of its author. He is an Irish Catholic, who has been working in France as a

journalist for the past three years, and who is interested in the Catholic movement both because of its achievements and its prospects, in the way of Catholic organization, and because of the very important bearings—which are probably largely ignored, outside of France—of the Catholic revival upon the future of France in the next few critical years.

No easily accessible account of the Catholic movement in France since the war exists in English, so far as I am aware. Nor indeed is there any single account of it in French. If there were, the obvious course would be to make some such work by an authoritative French writer available to English-speaking readers, by translating it. Such books, however, as exist on the subject are not well suited for translation. Probably the most complete account of the various Catholic activities of modern France is contained in the series of annual Catholic almanacs which have been published under the supervision of Monseigneur Baudrillart since 1920. They each contain a mass of valuable information in a single volume—from the private addresses of distinguished Catholic laymen to accounts of pilgrimages to Lourdes,—combined with specially written articles on subjects of topical importance. But one might as well think of translating the "Daily Mail Year Book," as it stands, into French as contemplate producing these Catholic almanacs in English. Nor is there any one volume, even among those which have been more or less directly prepared for propaganda purposes, which is suited to translation. Lectures which have been delivered to French audiences naturally take for granted a great deal that requires explanation to those who are not familiar with French politics or personalities; while those which are prepared for foreign audiences usually deal only in the broadest way with sub-

jects that are vaguely known already among Catholics abroad. In any case, such propagandist utterances, whether they are prepared with the object of stimulating enthusiasm and effort among Catholics, or whether they are the speeches of patriotic Frenchmen anxious to make their country appear in the most favorable light abroad, cannot be expected to deal critically with the subjects they discuss; nor would they criticize from the detached point of view that is of most interest to a foreigner.

This little book is therefore to be regarded as a frankly journalistic attempt to present, from the point of view of a foreign but sympathetic observer, a fairly intelligible account of the most important phases of the Catholic movement in France since the war. It obviously makes no attempt at offering a complete picture in any respect. It is no more than an honest attempt to answer, as far as my own information goes, some of the obvious questions that have interested me most since I have lived in France, and that I have most frequently been asked myself by Catholic visitors whom I have met in France. I have tried to answer them by stating facts, and quoting official documents or speeches; or, if opinions had to be offered, by quoting the opinions of competent French authorities. The arrangement of such a book has naturally presented considerable difficulty, since it must necessarily touch upon a great many questions each of which would require a large volume to itself if it were treated in detail. On the whole, I believe that each chapter will be found to cover one of the most important questions that I have been most usually asked, and that I have tried to answer for myself.

Thus, the first chapter attempts to discover approximately what is the actual proportion of modern France that can be regarded as definitely Catholic: a question

which is as impossible to answer precisely as it would be to define how much of modern England can be said to adhere faithfully to the Church of England. Having produced whatever evidence I have been able to obtain in order to dispose of this first question, I discuss in the next chapter the influences that since the war have tended to popularize the Church, to remove cold prejudices against it, and so to prepare the way for a reinforcement of the Catholic body. The third chapter discusses the present position of the clergy, their recruitment, the conditions in which they have to live, and their present immunity or otherwise from persecution by the State.

Throughout the book it has been impossible to avoid a certain amount of overlapping. Thus, the later part of the third chapter is to some extent concerned with the relations between the Church and the State, which I have made the special subject of the fourth chapter, but in a different aspect of it. I have reserved this fourth chapter for as full a discussion as possible of the actual political relations between the Church and the French governments since the war; which naturally resolves itself chiefly into an account of the diplomatic relations with the Vatican and the efforts by the French Catholics to repeal the legislation directed against the religious orders. In the following chapter also, questions of politics figure largely, but they are different questions from those discussed in Chapters III and IV. In the fifth chapter I have tried to explain roughly how far it is true that the Catholics of France have allowed themselves to become identified with reactionary politics, and what their association with the reactionary or conservative parties in France may involve for the future of the Church if the parties of the Left should come back to power. As the education

question is sure to be the main bone of contention between the Church and all future governments in France, I have dealt with it in this chapter also.

The three remaining chapters deal separately with distinct problems that may be of special interest to Catholic students. Chapter VI gives a general account of the Catholic trade unions, both industrial and agricultural, and explains their relations to the working class movement throughout France. I should point out here that, while the Catholic trade unions represent the most ambitious part of the Catholic movement in its social organization, they do not involve at all so large an amount of Catholic activity as do, for instance, the Catholic schools. But their possibilities are very far-reaching, and of their work little is known in detail outside of France. Similarly the Catholic press is only one more branch of Catholic activity, but it has been so highly developed and organized that a full account of it may be of particular interest to Catholic workers in English-speaking countries. The final chapter deals with another special phase of the Catholic movement, which may at first sight not seem to be sufficiently important to require a full chapter to itself. I believe, however, that this question of Catholic teaching in regard to family limitation involves the whole position of the Church in every modern country. It is commonly supposed by people outside of France that the French clergy acquiesce in artificial family limitation because it is so widely practised throughout France.

A candid examination of whether or not the French Catholics do uphold the strict Catholic moral teaching in this respect should, I believe, be of some general interest in itself. Needless to say, the evidence all shows that the modern French Catholics not only refuse to acquiesce in the current doctrines of the Malthusian

propagandists, but are actually trying to organize a moral crusade for the restoration of large families throughout the country. It is still more interesting, to my mind at least, to find out how far the preaching of those Catholic moralists, both priests and laymen, is acted upon by the Catholics in their private lives; and it makes a curious contribution to the modern study of population questions, to note that in the more Catholic parts of France the birth rate is almost invariably higher—and considerably higher—than in the parts where Catholic practice is almost extinct. The question has, moreover, an extremely important bearing upon the whole future of the Church in France; for in practice it means that the Catholics are constantly increasing their numbers by having large families, while the non-Catholic population is steadily dwindling away. If these two processes remain continuously at work, they will naturally result within a short time in increasing very substantially the proportion of practising Catholics in the whole of France. And if the present missionary efforts of the French clergy succeed in winning thousands of new converts among the city populations that have grown up without any religion, it may be confidently expected that this spread of Catholicism in the towns will be followed there also by a corresponding increase in the Catholic birth rate, while the non-Catholic birth rate shows every sign of declining faster than ever.

Such, then, is the modest, but I trust not altogether uninteresting, scope of this book. It will be seen that it discusses only practical questions from the detached viewpoint of a newspaper journalist. I have called it the Catholic "Reaction" partly in order to avoid any appearance of writing about theological matters; and at the same time because the word reaction seemed to be more

comprehensive than the word movement, and because what is taking place in France is in fact much more accurately described as a reaction than as a revival. The word revival is nevertheless entirely appropriate to a vast chapter of modern French history that I have not attempted to discuss here. For this Catholic reaction does in fact owe its driving force to a revival of religious faith. The record of French religious life in the past century is indeed one of the marvels of our time. It is not yet a hundred years since Frédéric Ozanam founded the Vincent de Paul Society among his fellow students at the University of Paris, or since Marie Jamet as a girl in her teens brought together the first Little Sisters of the Poor in Saint-Servan, or since Bernadette saw the miraculous visions that have since brought pilgrims from every corner of the world to Lourdes.

These, and many other similar stories are outside the scope of my own inquiry; but no account of the Catholic movement in modern France could be rightly visualized that did not keep them constantly present in the background. It must suffice to draw attention to certain facts that M. Georges Goyau puts on record in his recently published "Histoire Religieuse de la France"—that of the eighteen secular priests belonging to the nineteenth century who have already been either canonized or beatified or declared Venerable at Rome, nine are Frenchmen, while among the members of religious orders of both sexes in the same century who have already been declared Venerable, there are eight Frenchmen and ten Frenchwomen; and all the three nuns of the nineteenth century who have already been beatified are Frenchwomen who founded new religious orders. Such a record is in itself a sufficient indication of the extraordinary intensity of religious faith that has revived throughout France during

the past hundred years, and that is to be found in every corner of France, north, south, east and west.

Each of the following chapters was written with the intention that it should form part of the present book. Several of them have, however, since been published, either in part or in their entirety, as articles in the American *Catholic World* and in the *Irish Rosary*. I am indebted to the editors of both these reviews for permission to reproduce those parts of the book which have already appeared in their pages. I wish also to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the editors of other Catholic periodicals and newspapers, particularly *Blackfriars,* the *Catholic Times* and the *Irish Catholic,* as well as to the editors of *Studies,* and the *Dublin Review,* for their encouragement given to me while I was working as a journalist in France.

London, April, 1924.

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THE CATHOLIC REACTION IN FRANCE

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CHAPTER I

HOW MUCH OF FRANCE IS CATHOLIC?

THE final revision of the last French census shows that the total population of France in 1921, including Alsace-Lorraine, was 39,209,766. What proportion of these thirty-nine millions can honestly be described as practising Catholics? The question obviously cannot be answered with any approach to exact figures. Nor is it reasonable at the present phase of the Catholic revival to judge the conditions and the prospects of the Catholic Church in France by statistics of the number of persons who fulfil their Easter duties. The revival is more a tendency among the mass of the people, a vague feeling towards religion, expressing itself at once in disapproval of the former persecutions of the Church, and in a general sympathy with and admiration for the self-sacrifice and the devotion of the Church's ministers, than a definite acceptance of formal religious teaching or a regular return to religious observances. Nevertheless, any serious study of the Catholic revival in France must take that question as its starting point.

And while comparing the proportion of practising Catholics in the present time with the proportion of ten or

twenty years ago it is necessary also to take into account the conditions at the beginning of the last century.

To go back to the Middle Ages, or even to the eighteenth century, would be beyond the scope of the present inquiry. But what evidence is there available for forming any general judgment regarding the number of practising Catholics in the whole of France? The census returns of religious groups are notoriously unreliable in all countries. The French Registrar-General's office wisely discontinued the publication of such statistics concerning religious denominations forty years ago. In England those who do not feel any particular prejudice against the established church usually describe themselves, whether in census returns of the military hospitals or workhouses, or wherever else one may be questioned concerning one's religious persuasion, as belonging to the Church of England. In France it is customary in similar circumstances to describe oneself as "Catholic." The only evidence worth serious attention is that which is supplied from the dioceses themselves; and even such French diocesan returns and reports as are available are usually vague enough in their estimates. M. Georges Goyau, who is the most authoritative writer on religious matters in modern France, says quite candidly that "no statistics of religious practice in France have been compiled, and it is perhaps impossible that even any approximately accurate figures could be obtained. In the towns it is obviously very difficult, during the period prescribed for the performance of the Easter duties, to distinguish between the solemn annual communions and the innumerable communions of monthly, or weekly, or even daily communicants. But whether it be true that in France at the present time there are ten million practising Catholics, as some people declare, or only five millions, as others say,

their number is in either case only a minority of the whole people."

The Vicomte d'Avénel, whose close inquiry into the state of religious practice in each diocese of France since the war is the most complete evidence on the whole subject that is available, is equally frank in his admission that the practising Catholics of the country are at most a considerable minority of the whole. His general conclusions may be quoted at once beside those of M. Goyau, leaving aside for the moment any closer examination of how he has arrived at them. "We may therefore calculate," he writes at the end of an elaborate discussion of the evidence he has compiled, "that, for the whole area included in this investigation—leaving out Paris and the three departments of Alsace and Lorraine—of the 34 million persons of both sexes who live within our Republic, some 10 millions are practising Catholics, some 16 or 17 millions keep themselves more or less in conformity with the rules laid down by the Church, but only by complying with some of the statutory obligations, as by an intermittent attendance at Mass on Sundays, while only some seven or eight millions, among whom is a small group who are definitely hostile, live in total disregard of all religious observances, and although they have been baptized, are in fact Christians only in name. Such, after fifteen years of separation from the State, would seem to be the present state of religion in France. It could not be seriously argued that the country has become 'dechristianized.' It would indeed be more reasonable to assert that the contrary is the case, and that it is precisely because the Catholic faith has gained ground under a régime of which its friends were so much afraid and from which its enemies hoped for complete triumph—it is precisely because the feeling of the country has become more favorable to-

ward the Church that the powers that be have now restored diplomatic relations with the Vatican."

Briefly, then, M. d'Avenel would lead us to believe that there are some 10 million practising Catholics among the 34 millions of people living in France outside of Paris and Alsace-Lorraine. Even this optimistic estimate appears small enough, but M. d'Avenel argues that it is almost certainly much larger than it was before the Catholic revival began. He insists repeatedly that the religious revival dates from the beginning of the century and not from any wave of emotionalism produced by the war. He quotes an astonishing estimate made in 1847 by a well-known French priest, the Abbé Petitot, curé of St. Louis d'Antin, who declared that out of 32 million people who then formed the whole population of France, only about two million went to confession. Whether or not this estimate was unduly pessimistic, it is corroborated by another famous priest, the Abbé Bougaud, who himself subsequently became a bishop, who declared that a certain bishop of his acquaintance inquired, on being appointed to his see, how many of the 400,000 people in his diocese had made their Easter duties: he was told that the number was 37,000. And in 1851 the celebrated Mgr. Dupanloup, in one of his pastoral letters, deplored the fact that out of the 350,000 souls under his spiritual jurisdiction barely 45,000 went to the sacraments at Easter. In that particular diocese, of Orleans, the latest returns furnished to M. d'Avenel show that there are now over 100,000 instead of 45,000 communicants at Easter, and that the number of frequent communicants is now fifteen times as large as it was a few years ago.

Similarly, in the cathedral of Sens, he is informed that there are now 75,000 communions within the year, as compared with 35,000 ten years ago; and at Auxerre also

there are 40,000 more communions every year than there were not long ago. Such figures, however, afford no reliable basis for any general estimate. They may merely indicate that a small minority of devout Catholics now go to the sacraments more frequently than they did before. Nor can isolated parishes, or even dioceses, be taken as representing the state of Catholicism in the whole of France. Certain districts of France are well known to be more Catholic than other districts, yet in some parts very strict religious departments are found side by side with those in which religious practice is more or less extinct. In the west, for instance, the whole of Brittany and parts of Normandy are still very Catholic; so are Belley, Saint-Dié, and Chambéry in the East, and in the South, Rodez, Auch, Mende, Dax, and Cahors. In such provinces and districts the diocesan records show a high proportion of practising Catholics. It should be noted that the political representation of various parts of France affords no reliable indication of the prevalence or otherwise of religious observance. In many instances devout populations have elected some of the most notorious anticlericals in the French Parliament. Jules Ferry, for instance, represented a constituency in the Vosges in which the great majority of the men make their Easter duties, and in M. Malvy's constituency 95 per cent of the men go regularly to Mass and two thirds of them make their Easter duties.

M. d'Avenel tried to obtain as precise figures as possible from each of the French dioceses. He succeeded in getting returns from 67 dioceses in all out of a total of 87. The evidence he has collected in some cases is fairly extensive, in others meager enough. Thus he finds that in the department of the Aube there were very few parishes where one or two men went to the sacraments, while in

one parish—that in which religion is at its lowest ebb—not one of the four soldiers who were killed in the war was even baptized, and less than half of the children born in the parish even now are brought to the church for baptism. This, however, is an isolated case; and in many of the dioceses there are parishes side by side, of which one is above, and the next is below, the average. At Digne, for instance, in Provence, there are some parishes in which no one goes to the sacraments, and others in which everybody goes. In the extreme northeast, around Cambrai, it is generally the case that the agricultural population is mainly faithful to religious observance, while among the people in the mining districts of the same region, practically none of the men and very few of the women ever go to the sacraments. In other parts of the country, such as the diocese of Aix, which include large extents of mountain side by side with heavily populated industrial centers, the people who live in the mountains generally remain devoutly Catholic, while the townspeople are indifferent or sometimes hostile to religion.

But M. d'Avenel rightly insists that it would convey a wrong impression to say that the Church retains its hold chiefly among the agricultural population and has lost its influence everywhere in the towns; or even that "it is regarded with more favor in the mountains than in the lowlands, that it has more influence in the grazing lands than among the vineyards; that it is suited chiefly for those who have less education, less social influence, less independence of mind, and that it makes no appeal to the people of the towns." M. d'Avenel goes so far as to assert that "the present movement of Catholicism in France proves the direct opposite to be the case." M. Georges Goyau indeed speaks with more confidence of the towns than of the country, and his most serious apprehension for the future

is caused by the knowledge that in certain rural dioceses the minority of practising Catholics is actually diminishing. Due regard must also be paid to M. d'Avenel's insistence upon the fact that the indifference to religion which is found in the big towns and cities is nothing new, since even in the beginning of the last century it was at best only veiled by an outward appearance of conformity, imposed by the civil power and the old governing classes who found it useful to maintain an officially established religion "for the people." He speaks scornfully of the "Defenders of the Throne and Altar" under the Restoration, among whom the aristocracy had very little use for religious observance—so much so that in so important a cathedral town as Amiens there were not twenty men of the bourgeoisie who made their Easter duties in the time of Charles X. Alike in the country and in the towns, declares M. d'Avenel, all the reliable authorities agree that the decline of religious practice dates from long before the Republic of 1870, while in some dioceses the origin of the decline must be traced back to Jansenism.

M. d'Avenel's conclusions regarding the 67 dioceses from which he succeeded in collecting information may be set down before proceeding to a closer examination of the state of religion in the towns. The information he has collected is for some dioceses much more complete than for others. But M. d'Avenel concludes, from the evidence at his disposal, that these 67 dioceses (other than those of Paris and Alsace-Lorraine) may be roughly divided into three groups. His standard of values in classifying them is highly significant. The first category which he characterizes as "religious" comprises 27 dioceses out of 67, or slightly more than a third of the whole. In these the majority of the women go to Mass and attend the sacraments at Easter, while half of

the men go to Mass and a quarter of them go to the sacraments. The second category comprises 28 dioceses, and in these also the majority of the women go to Mass, but only half of them go to the sacraments, while only one-third of the men go to Mass and between one-eighth and one-quarter go to the sacraments. In the third and least religious category there are only 18 dioceses, or slightly less than one-quarter of the whole, and in these the returns show that only a minority even of the women go to Mass and less than one-eighth of the men go to the sacraments. M. d'Avenel adds an important post-script to this rough classification, emphasizing the fact that he describes this last category *not* as "irreligious," but as "indifferent," on the ground that even in these dioceses it is still an almost universal practice to bring the children to be baptized in the churches, and also to have marriages and burials religiously solemnized. Taken all together, these returns cover a total population of some 28 millions of people out of the 39 millions in all France. Paris and the immediately adjacent districts which are grouped in the department of the Seine naturally constitute a problem which must be examined separately, and this "Greater Paris" includes between 4½ and 5 million inhabitants. But apart from this concentration of people in and around Paris, M. d'Avenel's figures may fairly be taken as representative of the whole of France, seeing that the dioceses—comprising some six million people in all—which have not furnished adequate information include districts which must be classed in each of these categories. Thus, Nantes in Brittany and Bayonne at the foot of the Pyrenees would naturally be in the first category if the information concerning them were available, while Chartres and Limoges would be in the "indifferent" class.

Interesting and illuminative as they are, M. d'Avenel's calculations cannot, however, be taken as representing anything but a more or less accurate survey of the situation existing during the year 1921, while the conditions were changing rapidly. The most important change, which has been greatly accentuated by the war, is, of course, the steady migration from the country districts to the towns. Combined with the continuous decline of the population in many parts of the country the drift toward the towns has altered the whole balance of population in France. The census taken in 1921 shows that there is still a slight preponderance of rural over urban population, the proportion being 55 and 45 per cent. Since 1861, when the census showed a total of 37,386,000 inhabitants, the total of France's population has remained almost stationary. It had risen to 38½ millions on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, but was reduced to a little over 36 millions by the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. There was a very small increase at each subsequent census, until the population stood at 39,771,000 in the year before the great war. The Treaty of Versailles gave back Alsace-Lorraine to France, but the loss to the population through death in action of nearly 1½ million men, and the heavy decline in the birth rate owing to war conditions, was so great that even the addition of some two million people in the restored provinces did not suffice to bring back the total for the whole country to the pre-war figures. At the present figure of, roughly, 39,219,000, the population stands at almost the same level as it was twenty years ago, and only about a million higher than it was before the Franco-Prussian War.

But in the intervening fifty years there has been a continuous and increasingly rapid gravitation of the people from the country into the towns. Even in the past decade,

in spite of the destruction of a number of large towns in the invaded districts, the number of people living in the largest towns alone—those with more than 30,000 inhabitants in each—has increased by more than a quarter of a million. The latest French census report gives comparative figures showing the number of inhabitants in each town with a population of over 30,000 at every five years since 1881. There are now 88 towns with populations exceeding that figure, compared with only 47 in 1881; and the increase between the populations of these towns forty years ago and at the present time is in many cases extraordinary. Paris may be set on one side; it had 2,270,000 people then within its city walls, as against 2,900,000 now, and while it now has sixteen suburbs with over 30,000 people in each, it then had only one. And this enormous growth of the principal suburbs is only symptomatic of the general movement of population towards the department of the Seine, which has increased within the same period from 2,800,000 to 4,410,000. And the small department of the Seine itself is only the center of a much larger agglomeration of people in all the country surrounding the metropolis. But apart from this marked gravitation towards Paris and the districts that lie all round it, there has been a scarcely less marked migration of the population into other important industrial centers. In the Alpes-Maritimes, for instance, Cannes and Nice between them include nearly 190,000 people now as compared with some 85,000 in 1881. Marseilles has grown from 360,000 to 586,000 within the same period. Bordeaux and Toulouse, on the other hand, which are commercial rather than industrial centers, while they have gone on steadily increasing, have grown comparatively little, although they are respectively fourth and seventh in size among all the towns of France. But the

growth of the industrial centers has been extremely rapid. The department of the Nord, where this tendency to the industrial towns was most marked, has been so ruined by the war that it is necessary to take the figures for 1911, and even with the thirty years left for comparison they show an astonishing increase in a group of busy factory towns. Douai increased from 26,000 to 36,000; Lille from 178,000 to 218,000; Roubaix from 92,000 to 123,000; Tourcoing from 52,000 to 83,000, and Valenciennes from 28,000 to 35,000. In the adjacent department of the Pas-de-Calais there was an even more notable advance, Boulogne growing from 45,000 to 53,000; Calais from 47,000 to 72,000, and Lens from 10,000 to 32,000 within thirty years. In the southern industrial area there was a similar increase in the industrial population. Lyons grew from 377,000 in 1881 to 562,000 last year, and Villersbonne from 11,000 to over 56,000. Limoges, in the southwest, grew from 64,000 in 1881 to 92,000 in 1911, but had fallen off slightly in 1921 from the fact that all the part of France that surrounds it has become so depopulated that even this flow of immigration towards the towns cannot be maintained.

Obviously, while the population is shifting so rapidly it is impossible to make any precise estimate of the state of religious practice in the country. There is no doubt whatever that before long the urban population of France will have become larger than the rural population, and the most urgent problem for the clergy is to keep pace with the growth of the large cities. So far as the country is concerned the situation is hopeful enough. The decline of the French population as a whole is mainly caused by the gradual depopulation of large areas of agricultural land, but this tendency towards depopulation is by no means general throughout the country. Broadly speaking,

the statistics show that in those parts of France—like all Brittany, a large part of Normandy, the regions around the Pyrenees and the Alps, and other mountainous or primitive districts—where the Catholic tradition remains strong, there is either a much smaller tendency towards depopulation or else there is an actual increase from year to year. In these parts of France the future of Catholicism is fairly secure, and the general spread of a religious revival throughout France can find in them all the conditions for a favorable development. They are moreover for the most part more heavily populated already than the wide plains that stretch across the center of France or the rich vintage country inland from Bordeaux. It is in these areas where the population is dwindling rapidly, partly through deliberate restriction of the birth rate and partly through emigration towards the towns, that the Catholic Church has least influence and is in some parts actually losing the small number of faithful adherents that remain. But in whole tracts of France, where such conditions exist, it would seem that a sort of creeping paralysis has overtaken the life of the people. It is true that the Catholic Church is apparently dying out in these parts, just as all life is apparently dying out. It is difficult to see what will have happened by the end of another twenty or thirty years in these districts if the present process of depopulation continues, and there is no apparent means of arresting the process except by a complete revolution in the social habits of the people. One might argue without any fantastic exaggeration that, as the Catholic teaching is the only effective preventive of family limitation, these districts in which Catholicism has lost ground most may be for that very reason doomed to extinction by race suicide until they have become Catholic again. It may be that the systematic resettlement by

State intervention of these districts, which has already begun, by colonists from the surplus population of Catholic Brittany and other parts of France, which while remaining Catholic have kept up their natural increase of population, will itself lead to the restoration of Catholicism in the parts of France where its abandonment has resulted in the depopulation of whole countrysides.

The problem of the towns, however, remains to be solved. So long as industrial capitalism lasts, and if the impending bankruptcy of Central Europe does not result in a complete collapse of capitalism like that which has come about in Russia, we must expect that this process of migration from the country to the towns will continue, and that the population of France, like that of England, will more and more abandon the life of the fields for the congested and morbid life of the towns. Whether such conditions could ever become general throughout Europe, or could conceivably endure through the lifetime of another generation, may certainly be doubted. While the process is at work, however, the French clergy find themselves obliged to keep pace as best they can with the rapid growth of the large towns, and to deal with conditions that in many respects make religious organization extremely difficult. In some ways undoubtedly the cities of France have afforded a wonderful training ground for the more zealous of the younger clergy, and the industrial centers of the north, and Paris itself, have given a new energy and a new discipline in action to many of the most active members of the episcopate. It was, for instance, a great acquisition to the Church in Brittany when Mgr. (now Cardinal) Charost, still a comparatively young man, who had been tried in the severest school as Bishop of Lille before and during the war, came to Rennes to succeed to the Primacy of the most Catholic province in

France after the death of the aged Cardinal Dubourg. And throughout the country the benefit of this direct contact with the problem of missionary work in the industrial towns is felt wherever clerical appointments are made which transfer priests from the towns to the country districts.

But while this advantage is considerable, the difficulties of religious organization in the big modern towns increase much faster than the existing clergy can deal with them. The industrial suburbs of Paris had grown so fast with the last quarter of the nineteenth century that several of the outlying parishes had attained such dimensions that no clergy could possibly cope with them. Thus, when the separation of the Church and State was decreed in 1905 the parish of Notre Dame de Clignancourt comprised 121,000 people, while the parish of Sainte-Marguerite comprised 96,000, and that of Saint-Pierre-de-Montrouge 83,000. The largest cathedrals in Europe could scarcely find room for such vast congregations if they had wanted to go to church, and the churches which were available in these parishes were in most cases little more than small chapels. Even at the present time the church of St. Jacques-St. Christophe at La Villette has seating accommodation for no more than 580 people, and only 750 more could find room in the two auxiliary chapels—out of a total population of 70,000 in the parish. And in the parish of St. Germain-des-Charonne, with 62,000 people of all ages, there is room for only 400 people in the church itself and less than 400 more in the auxiliary chapel. At Levallois-Perret there is only one church altogether, without any auxiliary chapel, and it has to serve for all purposes for a population of 72,000. The provision of new churches throughout the nineteenth century was utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of

the growth in the population of Paris. M. Goyau makes the comparison all the more striking by contrasting the figures at the beginning and at the end of the Concordat. In 1801, when the Concordat was concluded by Napoleon, there were not quite 800,000 people in the diocese of Paris, which counted 125 parishes and 422 priests. In 1906, just after the rupture of the Concordat, the population of Paris had risen to four millions, or about five times the former total, while the number of parishes had increased only to 147, and the number of priests to 765. The shortage of priests was made more serious by the fact that the number of curates in each parish had ceased to bear any relation to the size of their congregations; one parish with less than 30,000 people had eleven curates, while Notre Dame de Clignancourt, with 121,000 people, had only nine.

The late Cardinal Amette took in hand this question of providing more adequate facilities for the overcrowded modern suburbs. Within six years from the beginning of 1906 he had so increased the number of parishes in the city itself and in the suburbs that he had brought within reach of nearly 650,000 people a reasonable possibility of religious observance. It had previously required considerable self-sacrifice of time to attend a church, to say nothing of the desperate overcrowding if they had gone in large numbers. The work that Cardinal Amette began has been zealously carried on by his successor, Cardinal Dubois, and by the end of 1921 the number of parishes in the city itself has increased from 69 to 81, and those in the suburbs from 78 to 95. Of these 29 new parishes 19 have been established in districts where no sort of parish had existed previously. In addition to this increase in the number of parishes, 30 new chapels have been built within the same period of

twelve years—four of them in Paris itself and 26 in the suburbs. Even yet the work of extending the religious organization of Paris is far from complete. Twenty-eight of the parishes in the diocese still include more than 40,000 people in each, and plans for the construction of 15 more new churches to reduce the overcrowding in the others are already prepared. Nor is this all. Canon Couget has published a report, based on the last census returns, which estimates a need for 100 additional churches and 500 more priests to complete the missionary work that remains to be done if the religious life of Paris is to be reëstablished.

And in the other large towns which have grown with a rapidity similar to Paris the clergy are showing a similar energy in forming new parishes and undertaking every form of missionary activity. Sotteville, an important suburb of Rouen, in Normandy, had one new church in 1913, and a second in 1920. In Lyons—the third town of France in point of size, and one of those which have grown most rapidly—20 new parishes have been organized within the past 15 years, notwithstanding the heavy drain on the priesthood that was caused by mobilization in the war. Some 50,000 people have thus been brought within range of constant missionary effort, and the result may be seen already in such a parish as that of Oullins, which had only three practising Catholics out of a population of 2,000 fourteen years ago, and which now has more than 800 people attending Mass on feast days and 400 communicants at Easter. This parish, which is cited by M. Goyau as a brilliant example, is, of course, exceptional, and its conversion—which has incidentally transformed its politics from those of a violently anti-clerical to those of an "Union Sacrée" constituency—is largely due to the personality of its curé, who is himself

the son of a workingman: barely seven years after he had founded his new parish in such unpromising surroundings, he was called to military service and could not return till the war ended, when he rejoined his congregation with the red ribbon of a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. In another southern center of industry, St. Etienne, the success of a similar adventure has been, if less overwhelming, still certainly remarkable. The new parish of Monthieux was created there just before the war, and at the end of seven years the number of marriages celebrated in this church had trebled, while one-tenth of the families now make some contribution towards the upkeep of the church. Most remarkable of all is the achievement of the Bishop of Versailles, Mgr. Gibier, whose diocese includes a population of 800,000. He made up his mind that 50 new churches were needed to overtake the immense immigration of an industrial population into what was in the early part of the last century a more or less completely rural department. Eight years after he issued his first appeal in 1907 for the money to commence this ambitious program no less than 30 new churches had been built and were already in use, while the remainder of the 50 are well on their way towards construction, if not actually towards completion.

Yet, hopeful as these statistical comparisons may be, the progress that they record in opening up new fields of action to the missionary clergy is less remarkable than the clear evidence they give of the almost complete extinction of religious practice in the more recently formed suburbs of the industrial towns. Undoubtedly the impression that emerges most clearly from an examination of the facts is that, while there is at once more vitality and more energy on the part of the clergy in the towns than in the country, and at the same time a readier response to their

efforts toward a revival of religion, the proportion of practising Catholics is extremely small in relation to the whole population of these large urban centers. The proportion, of course, varies both as between towns and as between particular districts in the same towns. In the aristocratic quarter of the Boulevard St. Germain in Paris the churches are crowded all day on Sundays and are never empty on week days, while the number of churches in the quarter is quite astonishing. In Menilmontant, on the other hand—the most overcrowded working-class district in Paris, and the headquarters of revolutionary trade unionism in the city—the proportion of practising Catholics is very small, and the total population in the parish whom the clergy can reasonably regard as being in every way accessible to their ministrations is probably not one-tenth of the whole. There is a similar contrast between conditions in different cities. The personality of some great prelate who gave his people a splendid example of courage and devotion during the war—as did Mgr. Julien of Arras or Cardinal Luçon of Reims—often increases the extent of sympathy upon which the clergy can count, even if it does not actually increase the number of practising Catholics. In cities like Bordeaux or La Rochelle, remote from the war area, such opportunities were not given to the senior members of the clergy. It is in the northeast above all, partly because of its proximity to Paris, and still more because of the vast field for missionary activity offered by its many industrial cities, and above all because of the opportunity for social action offered by the demands of reconstruction in the devastated area and seized by the clergy with such magnificent patriotism, that the religious revival is most active. But it is also in the northeast that the Church has most ground to recover. In the northwest and the extreme southwest

the Church has always retained its hold upon a primitive and religiously minded people. It is in the center and the south—in those parts of France where the population is most steadily declining and where the density of population is already below the average for most of France—that the practice of religion is still gradually declining in some places, and at best little more than holding its ground. But it may be that in these parts of France, which appear now to be doomed to gradual depopulation through the deliberate refusal of a listless and self-indulgent people to undertake the burden of families, the Church will yet find its greatest opportunity. For no other social force seems capable of introducing that sense of moral discipline without which so large a part of France seems doomed to decay—the decay which results inevitably from the moral sterility of materialism and the practice of deliberate family limitation.

CHAPTER II

THE WAR AND THE REACTION TOWARDS CATHOLICISM

If we accept the Vicomte d'Avenel's general estimate of the number of practising Catholics in France as more or less accurate, we may assume that roughly one-third of the whole population of France may be considered as being definitely Catholic—that is to say, more or less scrupulous in religious practice, while openly professing Catholicism and supporting Catholic activity and Catholic policies. The remaining two-thirds of the people are by his account either indifferent or hostile. But the old hostility diminished rapidly during the early days of the war, and there is no doubt that the reaction against the anticlericalism of Emile Combes and his colleagues has been gathering strength ever since. The mass of the people are now on the whole friendly to the Catholic Church—in much the same way as the mass of English people are well disposed towards the Church of England, even if most of them never go to church and a considerable number regard clergymen with a certain degree of contempt.

But whereas the general attitude towards the church in both countries may roughly be compared, the war has done much more in France to revive the prestige of the Church than it did in England. There have been obvious explanations of this difference. The whole clergy of mili-

tary age in France were mobilized with all the rest of the male population at the first outbreak of war, and they remained mobilized to the very end of it. For them it was no question of volunteering to act as regimental or divisional chaplains attached to the headquarters staff and praised by every one for having shown great public spirit in volunteering for active service at all even under such conditions. Most of the French priests who were mobilized went into the ranks and served in the trenches as common soldiers, at any rate for a considerable period of the war. They remained undistinguishable from the rest of their comrades-in-arms except in so far as their own personal example marked them out in each case. And it is a splendid tribute to the French clergy that they bore themselves under the test thus placed upon them with such dignity and valor that they did more in that way than they could have done in years of missions to restore public respect for their profession all over France.

Fighting as common soldiers, they distinguished themselves everywhere by doing far more than their duty. Their discipline, their personal bravery, their indomitable courage, and their unquestioning patriotism were remarked upon again and again. M. Clemenceau, one of the most hardened veterans of the anticlerical persecution, found himself obliged, not by formality but by sheer necessity of recognizing virtue, to decorate Catholic soldier priests time after time on the field of battle after a successful attack or defensive action; and many of his last utterances since his retirement have been devoted to congratulating the Catholic priesthood on the way that they responded to the claims of patriotism in the war.

This personal valor of the French clergy was all the more impressive because it came as a surprise. The clergy had been ridiculed so long as being effeminate

and sanctimonious, they had been calumniated for so many years as the agents of a church which was alleged to be the most dangerous enemy of the Republic, that at best they were not expected to be more than passable soldiers. The war showed how false these calumnies had been. The bare figures of the official statistics are eloquent enough. Practically 32,700 French ecclesiastics were mobilized for active service in the war, of whom 4,618 were killed and 10,414 were mentioned in dispatches, while their military decorations included 9,378 *Croix de Guerre,* 1,533 *Médailles Miltaires,* and 895 received the Legion of Honor.

The brief records of each diocese given in the first volume (1920) of Mgr. Baudrillart's *Almanach Catholique* are worth studying in connection with a table showing the comparative population of each department. Each diocese corresponds roughly, since the establishment of the centralized civil administration by Napoleon, to the department of which it is the religious center, and the average population of each department in the whole of France is considerably less than half a million. It is impossible to make more than a superficial comparison between the different dioceses, but the bare facts give a clear indication of how wide an influence the war work of the clergy must have exercised. Take the first diocese in the alphabetical order of the list for instance—that of Agen, in the relatively unimportant department of Lot-et-Garonne, whose population has fallen steadily from some 330,000 sixty years ago to less than a quarter of a million to-day. With some 450 parishes, the diocese had 180 priests mobilized on active service, and eight of these were killed in action. One was decorated with the Legion of Honor, six with the military medal, 40 with the *Croix de Guerre,* and they had between them 62 mentions in

dispatches. The dioceses of Aix-en-Provence and Marseilles, both in the department of the Bouches-du-Rhône, afford a very different picture. Here, although the population has risen with astonishing rapidity, from some 500,000 sixty years ago to nearly 850,000 now, there are only 214 parishes—a conspicuous instance of the shortage of priests in an industrial area that is growing very fast. But the 129 parishes of the diocese of Aix furnished 80 priests on active service, as well as 30 seminarists, and they received 40 *Croix de Guerre* between them; while that of Marseilles sent 127 priests and 67 seminarists, of whom 21 never returned.

In Corsica, with 420 parishes but a population of less than 300,000, some 90 priests were mobilized. In the diocese of Albi, in the department of the Tarn, where the population is scarcely larger than in Corsica—there are 509 parishes—349 priests were mobilized, of whom 17 were killed in battle.

The diocese of Amiens, capital of the department of the Somme, is one of those in which the clergy have had the finest chance to show their patriotism. Two-thirds of the parishes have been left in utter ruins, and almost 300 churches were destroyed or seriously wrecked, while the presbyteries and other buildings used for religious purposes suffered equally. It was one of the most important dioceses in France, and although its population was barely half a million before the war, it had 750 parishes. Two hundred and forty of its priests fought through the war, while 23 of them were killed, and 75 of them won the *Croix de Guerre*. But it is in the reconstruction of the Somme, even more than on the battlefields, that the clergy of this devastated area of France have won a new influence in the lives of the people for whom they have striven with utter devotion. Many of the clergy have since the

war worked as common laborers at the rebuilding of their churches and their presbyteries. The department of the Nord, which is the most crowded part of France outside of Paris, had two dioceses—those of Cambrai and Lille—with nearly 800 parishes between them. The two dioceses had 132 priests killed in action, while the diocese of Lille alone had nearly 180 mentions in dispatches. On the coast of the Bay of Biscay, where clerical influence has generally waned, the diocese of La Rochelle counts 220 priests who have come back from active service, while the memory of the 34 who were killed has given a conclusive answer to those who formerly decried the Church for its lack of patriotism. The diocese of Bordeaux had 14 priests and 11 seminarists killed, out of 400 mobilized, which compares very favorably with the 480 who were mobilized from the diocese of Paris.

A cursory examination of these records shows how complete must have been the penetration of all parts of France by the effects of mobilization. And apart from the priests and seminarists who left their parishes to join the colors, those who remained behind everywhere gave an example of splendid patriotic service. In the remote southwest, the late Cardinal de Cabrières of Montpellier, who was already nearly ninety years of age when the war broke out, could scarcely have been expected to undertake any active personal service himself. But he showed his spirit by volunteering at the outset of the war to act as a night orderly in the local hospital, and on several nights every week he was regularly at his post to encourage and minister to the wounded and the sick, and to help keep the rest of the night staff awake during the small hours.

Away at the other extremity of France, in the northeast corner which the Germans had invaded and overrun,

another priest some fifty years younger than the Cardinal was showing the same spirit of patriotism in a different way. The Abbé Pinte was a professor of electrical engineering in the technical institute at Roubaix, behind Lille, and with a small band of men who shared his indomitable courage and spirit of enterprise he baffled for more than three years every attempt of the German authorities to track down and suppress the local sheet, the *Oiseau de France,* which they printed to keep the French people under their occupation in touch with what was really happening on the other side of the barrier made by the German trenches. The paper was printed privately by a hand press which was constantly moved from place to place to escape detection. But its concealment was less difficult than another task which the Abbé Pinte made his own.

Behind a secret door made in the wall of his laboratory at the technical institute, he had a private wireless receiving station erected at which he listened every evening at the time when the allied military communiqués were issued from the Eiffel Tower. Time after time the institute was raided and ransacked from top to bottom, every plank of the floor being torn up to discover his hiding place. Sentries were placed in the corridors night and day, and the French priest several times sat listening for the message in his hiding place while the sentries tramped up and down outside his room. In the end the pursuit became so hot that he had to accept the services of a girl who volunteered to undertake his work at the listening post while on successive days he ostentatiously walked out in the streets of Roubaix at the hour when the communiqués were being sent out, to show that it was not he who was intercepting them. In the end he was caught, as the result of a successful raid by German spies,

disguised as Dutch policemen, who broke into one of the Allied spy headquarters at Rotterdam and discovered secret documents which enabled them to gain the password and to forge the documents necessary to win the confidence of the Abbé Pinte. He and his colleagues were caught red-handed and arrested, in the last year of the war, and were all sent to punishment cells in German prisons. One of them died, but the Abbé Pinte was able to return after the liberation of Roubaix to his former duties as a professor. But the story—and I quote it only as one of hundreds of true stories of the wonderful daring shown by the French priests during the war—has since become known all over France. Incidentally it has helped to restore confidence in the relations between priests and people in an industrial part of France when religion had become all but extinct.

These are only two instances selected at random from the annals of the French clergy during the war. In every part of the country, priests showed the same wonderful self-sacrifice and activity, giving an example of heroism in the trenches and of untiring energy among the civilian population. That example alone would have gone a long way towards restoring their prestige—it effectively demolished the old idea that effeminacy and cowardice were the natural characteristics of the priesthood. The clergy simply showed that they asked no more than to undertake the ordinary duties of every citizen, and they proved that even under a régime which deprived them of many of their civil rights, they were more public-spirited, more proud of their national heritage as Frenchmen, and determined to uphold the rights of that heritage, than any other class in the whole country. This in itself was much, but this example of civic patriotism was only a minor part of the contribution that the French clergy made

towards France's victory in the war. A special responsibility was thrown upon them, to support the morale of the civil population, to console and encourage the bereaved, and to sustain the faith of the whole people in their power to drive the invader out of the country. Literally millions of people who had ceased to practise their religion before the war returned instinctively to find at least an echo of the faith of their childhood in the churches which for years before they had never entered. Chapels and shrines all over the country, no less than famous centers of pilgrimage such as the Church of Our Lady of Victories in Paris, were crowded with women and children who came to light candles for the safety of their husbands or fathers or brothers in the trenches. The clergy had a supreme opportunity to welcome back those who had lost the faith within the doors which had always been open to them except when anticlerical governments had deliberately closed down churches or evicted religious communities and sold their chapels for commercial purposes.

All over France the war brought back a sudden revelation of what the churches had meant throughout the centuries that they had stood as the center of each community. In remote parts of the country where the German invasion could never have been expected to reach, the constant anxiety of families whose men folk were all with the army brought thousands of unbelievers back, if only for a few weeks at a time, to a sympathetic contact with the Church. But it was in the devastated area that the churches made their strongest appeal to the people. Sometimes it was not until after they had been destroyed that the people could discover how empty the life of the villages had become without them. "Out of 572 churches, large and small, in the department of the Meuse," writes

Mgr. Ginisty, Bishop of Verdun, "325 have suffered from the war, and 160 of them have been completely destroyed. The people of the villages, even those who were indifferent in the past, have felt the loss of their churches and remember sadly how all the chief events of their lives have been connected with them—their baptisms, confirmations, marriages, funerals—since the church is the meeting-place at once for joyful celebrations and for sad farewells." There are more sad than joyful memories attaching to the churches in these days, but they are memories that have made an indelible mark upon the present generation and that will not be forgotten by the generation which comes after them. Mgr. Ginisty describes his own diocese as "one vast cemetery, where sleep our French soldiers, our allies, and our enemies—more than a million men whose tombs, for the most part unidentified, reach along the whole front around Verdun." Among all these graves before long a vast ossuary will be raised—the third in the series of four colossal sepulchres which will mark the whole Allied line from the Channel to the Swiss frontier, one on the Vimy Ridge, one on the Marne, one at Verdun, and one at Hartmannsweilerkopf, overlooking the plain of the Rhine. On each of these will be a tower with a perpetual light shining out far overland, and the people all around will know that devout monks and nuns are praying there ceaselessly night and day in perpetual adoration.

Such monuments cannot but produce an incalculably deep impression on the minds of the people among whom they stand. The money with which they are being built—the money with which the 2,000 ruined churches of the devastated area are being rebuilt—is being raised in every parish in France, and the committees that issue the appeal for subscriptions are representative of every part of the

country. The pride of the people in their churches as national monuments has been aroused, and they are responding generously to the appeal—at a time when appeals of desperate urgency are being made to them from every side. And with this pride in the churches themselves there is combined a feeling that the Germans deliberately tried to destroy the churches, in the belief that by destroying religious life they would break down the moral resistance of the people more quickly. Mgr. Chollet, Archbishop of Cambrai, claims quite definitely that the war of economic destruction was accompanied by, and intensified by, a relentless war against religion by the Germans. He declares that they considered that "religious faith involved the virtue of patriotism, and the priests supported the moral courage of the people. Then the Germans knew that the priests were men of intelligence and bravery, that they were as active as they were devoted, and they were accordingly suspected as spies. That is why the practice of religion was hindered in every possible way, and why our unfortunate parish priests were constantly being punished by imprisonment and by fines. One of them went one day into his own sacristy while a Protestant service was being conducted by the Germans in his church, creeping close to the walls and walking on tiptoe to fetch his breviary which he had forgotten to bring away. The German clergyman immediately denounced him for his audacity, and he was obliged to pay a fine of 1,000 marks. The Archbishop himself was not once allowed to leave his town, even to give confirmation less than three miles away. We were practically left without any means of communication with the Pope, who was monstrously deceived as to our fate. Our sanctuaries were commandeered, and at the gates of Cambrai a German officer even violated the tabernacle,

plunging his hands into the ciborium, full of consecrated hosts. Our churches were used as shops—in one place as a powder magazine and in another as a pork-butcher's—they are, indeed, worthy sons of Luther, who bequeathed to them all his own hatred of Catholicism."

Detached from its context, this last sentence seems a grotesque exaggeration. It cannot be denied that there were probably more practising Catholics among the German armies than there were on the French side of the trenches, and the persistent representation of the war as a conflict between Protestant Germany and Catholic France, which is still diligently maintained by many French nationalists, is quite obviously untrue. But the clear and damning evidence of great French ecclesiastics like Cardinal Luçon or Mgr. Chollet or Mgr. Julien when they gave testimony of the deliberate and wanton destruction of religious monuments and the interference with religious life by the German armies during the war is too often overlooked. The facts are as incontestable as are the facts of the wreckage of Louvain and Ypres by Germany in the first months of the war; and they have branded deep scars upon the memories of some five million French people whose homes were in the devastated districts, as well as upon the whole manhood of France who saw these horrible things with their own eyes in the country that lay around the battlefields.

And so, especially in the devastated districts, the whole people have rallied around the Church as one of their most venerable national institutions which has been attacked. How much this sort of support is worth from the point of view of real religious revival, it is not easy to say. It may indeed have involved very little in most places, so far as any actual increase of religious practice is concerned. But it is an immense gain to the Church in France, in the

present stage of its struggles towards recovery, that many of its former enemies have now not only ceased to be its enemies but come forward with alacrity to fight its battles and to lend their services in its cause. One of the most remarkable and most impressive results of the war, so far as the devastated districts are concerned, has been the general popularity of the clergy and the conversion of most of the inveterate anticlericals to friendship with them. Any one who remembers the intensity of bitter feeling that existed between the anticlerical and the Catholic parties in France before the war must have been amazed at the way in which public men all over the devastated area, who were formerly bitter enemies of the Church, have given active support to the projects for raising money to rebuild the ruined churches. The explanation is of course quite obvious. The whole appearance of the countryside in the Somme or the Pas-de-Calais, in the Aisne or the Meuse, is completely changed by the loss of its innumerable little village churches dotted over every few miles of ground—still more by the destruction of the magnificent old cathedrals. People of every class and of every shade of politics realize that the country can never again be what it was before the war until the old churches have been restored—that no village, however small, can be complete or recover its old sense of civic life until its church stands in its midst. And so it is that Radical senators like M. Jonnart or M. Clemenceau who voted for all the anticlerical legislation before the war, and countless local politicians and administrators who in the old days vied with one another in their efforts to extirpate the influence of the Church from their own districts, now give their names and give handsome subscriptions to the committees which are being formed to raise funds for the churches. In Amiens not long ago the bishop presided at a meeting of

some two hundred mayors—many, if not most, of whom were old anticlericals, who had come specially to give their support to his scheme for floating a reconstruction loan to rebuild the churches in his diocese.

Each of the twelve dioceses which were devastated has by this time either floated a separate loan of its own for the reconstruction of its churches or has taken part in the joint loan which was issued in the spring of 1922 (and subscribed in full within less than a week). Two names may be specially mentioned in connection with the proposal, not only for their great achievement in carrying out so large a financial experiment but for their general work in the reconstruction of their own areas. The idea of raising these loans was first suggested by the Chanoine Thouvenin of Nancy, who has since the war been the most active organizer of economic reconstruction in his own department. He had with conspicuous success founded coöperative reconstruction societies of the type which has been generally adopted throughout the devastated districts for the rebuilding of villages and rural communities. He conceived the idea of applying to the ruined churches the privilege granted to all large groups of claimants under the Reparation Law, of issuing loans on the guarantee of the yearly installments with which the French Government has pledged itself to pay off their established claims to compensation. The idea was quickly adopted by the other departments as well, and in the Pas-de-Calais the secretarial work was undertaken by the Abbé Leroy, who had been playing the same part in the reconstruction of all the region around Arras as the Chanoine Thouvenin had around Nancy.

The names of both priests—and they are only two of the most conspicuous out of a large number who have been toiling with equal energy and ability since the end

of the war—will go down to history as those of the men who did more than any others to bring back to life the districts which the Germans had done their utmost to destroy. Not only have they found the means of restoring, or at least commencing to rebuild, the churches which have for centuries been the life and soul of the villages, but all over the country that they have covered day after day in pilgrimages on foot, on bicycles, in motor cars, they have helped the exiles to come back, they have helped to find the materials to build houses, and to get together the implements and the seeds with which to bring their land back into cultivation. Wherever they have gone they have founded or reconstructed coöperative societies of every kind—for the purchase of building materials and agricultural requirements, for the assessment and valuation of reparation claims, for floating important loans. Above all, they have brought back faith and courage among the people who had to return to a wilderness of desolation where their homes had once been. In every corner of their departments the names of these priests and of others like them have brought confidence and hope. Their labors may even be measured in terms of material achievement—they have rebuilt and brought back to cultivation whole countrysides. But the moral results of their indomitable energy and faith are less easily calculated. At the very least they have made thousands of people admire and even love the Church who hated it before. They have established a tradition of confidence and sympathy and unbounded respect between themselves and a people which was largely hostile to the clergy in the days before the war. It may well be that they have already actually increased the number of real Catholics in their own corners of France.

It is probable indeed that most of the younger and

more zealous of these French priests, especially in the devastated areas, are far from regretting that they were mobilized for service as ordinary soldiers. Their experience of the trenches gives them a supreme advantage over the more fortunately placed who managed to escape active service, and while it finally silences all taunts against their patriotism, it has in itself given them a closeness of comradeship with other men which could never have been gained otherwise. But apart from the priests who served as simple soldiers, some mention must be made also of the military chaplains—many of whom were exiled members of religious orders (there were 55 Jesuit chaplains alone) who obtained permission to come back for such service with the army in the field. The Law of Separation in 1905 had automatically brought to an end all religious celebrations in the army; but in the colonies a certain number of military chaplains were kept on and were supported and were recruited by the *Œuvre de l'Aumônerie Militaire Coloniale* founded by Mgr. Leroy. In peace time no military chaplains whatever remained with the army at home, and it was only in time of war that the law of 1880, which permitted ministers of various religions to be attached to the troops, became operative. When war broke out, therefore, all was in confusion; some obsolete lists of names that had been kept for reference in the War Office were brought to light, while certain generals and colonels, without waiting for any official authorization, took priests who had volunteered as chaplains with them to the field of action. But the number of chaplains available was hopelessly inadequate, and it was not until the Comte de Mun issued his famous appeal in the *Echo de Paris* that the question was seriously approached. Within a few days more than 120,000 francs had been received in subscriptions and within a few hours

several hundreds of priests had sent in their names as candidates for chaplaincies. With this conspicuous beginning the Comte de Mun organized a "Bureau" to recruit, direct, and maintain the military chaplains whom he obtained permission from the War Office to send to the front as auxiliaries to the small number of official chaplains.

M. de Mun literally killed himself by his labors on behalf of their organization. The first group of chaplains was sent to the front on August 27, 1914, and on the 6th of October he died suddenly from exhaustion. But his work was carried on without interruption by his friend, M. Geoffroy de Grandmaison, who had been intimately associated with him in the original enterprise, and from the first month of the war until the definite demobilization of the chaplains in July, 1919, the work of the organization never relaxed. It supplied more than 400 chaplains in all, of whom 270 were secular priests and 135 members of religious orders. Seventy of them were killed in action, and about thirty were taken prisoners; while between them the 400 chaplains received some 1,100 mentions in dispatches. And now that these soldier priests—whether they served in the ranks or as army chaplains—have returned to their ecclesiastical duties, the old gibes against them are silenced. The custom in France of wearing in one's buttonhole the thin ribbon of the *Croix de Guerre* or *Médaille Militaire* or the Legion of Honor is shared by the clergy; and there are few able-bodied priests who do not wear at least one ribbon fastened to their cassocks. On patriotic festivals they wear their medals as well as at their religious ceremonies. Many of them carry an empty sleeve, or limp with a wooden leg, and it was a priest blinded in the war, the Abbé Bridoux of Boulogne, who celebrated the solemn mass on the 21st

of May last year for the ceremonies which consecrated the ossuary in which a hundred thousand soldiers have all been buried in one grave, overlooking the battlefields where they were killed around Notre Dame de Lorette.

But apart from the demonstration of patriotism given by the French clergy, the French Catholic revival owes an incalculable debt to the personal example of devout piety given by many of the great Catholic generals who gradually filled the more important commands. The army had been rotten with politics when the war began. The War Office, like most of the other ministries, had been captured by the anticlerical Freemasons. The religious devotion which is the strongest personal characteristic of Marshal Foch and many others who now hold the highest positions in the army was under the pre-war conditions a definite barrier to advancement. Foch himself had been actually deprived of his position as Chief of the Staff College by an anticlerical War Minister. There were many such points of acute conflict in those days, when the Government was ordering its officers to take charge of the expulsion of religious orders from their own establishments. Literally thousands of Catholic officers had resigned during the ten years before the war rather than obey orders of this kind, and have had to live in poverty ever since. The friction thus created between the War Office and the traditions of the service had naturally resulted in a careful selection of anticlerical officers for the higher commands. But the war showed at once how disastrous an effect these political appointments could have upon the direction of the army in the field. Marshal Joffre, being a soldier who regarded politics in their right perspective, set himself ruthlessly to supersede all those senior officers who showed themselves incompetent or lacking in energy in the first months of the war, regard-

less of the fact that he was a conspicuous Freemason. Nearly 200 generals were dismissed or placed on the retired list before the end of 1915; while the rise of others, who were ultimately to lead France to victory, was very remarkable.

Among these generals who rose rapidly from the command of divisions or even of brigades to the control of army corps, or armies, or army groups, there was a closely united band of soldiers of a type which is eminently characteristic of modern France. Generals Pau and Castelnau belonged to an older generation, and Marshal Foch had himself reached the age for retiring. But among the younger generals, such as Mangin, Gouraud, Franchet d'Esperey, Weygand, the same ascetic and deeply religious type was soon seen to predominate. Old General Pau, who commanded the Southern Army Group in the first critical phases of the German attack never went anywhere without bringing his personal chaplain with him, who said Mass for him wherever he might be. General Castelnau, who commanded the second army around Nancy and soon afterwards commanded the Southern Army Group, stretching from east of Verdun to the Swiss frontier, was no less devout and unashamed in the practice of his religion. He has since been elected to the *Chambre des Députés* and is perhaps the most symbolic and picturesque figure among the Catholic conservatives. And Marshal Foch, whose promotion was extremely rapid between the battle of the Marne in September (where he commanded an Army Corps) to the first battle of Ypres in November, when he had been placed in command of the whole northern sector, including Sir John French's Expeditionary Force, was as pious in his own unostentatious way as either Pau or Castelnau.

These things became known in course of time as the

newspapers filled column after column of print with details about the personal lives and military records of the army commanders, and while the great generals never obtruded their own religious principles upon any one under their command, it was impossible not to recognize that their religious convictions were to an extraordinary extent essential to their character, and were, in their own belief, the main source of their strength. No one ever accuses Marshal Foch of being in any way a *poseur,* and when to the people who went to see him on political or diplomatic business and who asked him how he thought the war was going, he used to answer habitually, with that severe economy of words that every one in France associates with him, that "we are not doing too badly: I believe that Christ will save us," they not only realized that he meant what he said, but began to feel that such intense conviction must have something real behind it. And as every detail in the career of all the great generals was naturally discussed and talked over again and again, month after month, it was recalled that Foch had a brother who was a Jesuit, a member of the greatest teaching order in France which had been broken up and expelled, while he himself had been deprived of his position as Chief of the Staff College solely because he was disliked by an anticlerical government, although he had occupied the post with a distinction that had made its mark upon the whole generation of staff officers whom he had trained.

It may indeed be said that the personal prestige of Marshal Foch and the example of his simple, unflinching Catholic faith has been one of the most important factors in discrediting the anticlerical governments which ruled France before the war. And so long as the memories of the war remain clear in the minds of Frenchmen, there will be a deep popular repugnance towards any resumption

of the old anticlerical persecutions. The name of Foch alone stands like a bulwark between the Catholic Church in France and her persecutors; and beside him there is a whole group of the most brilliant, the most fearless, and the most successful generals in the French army, who have given within their own sphere a scarcely less impressive example of their faith in and devotion to their church. Marshal Lyautey in Northern Africa is not only regarded by his troops and his officers with the respect that men will always feel for a great man who leads an intensely ascetic life, but is loved by them all and recognized as one of the men who have done most in the past fifty years to consolidate the waning prestige of France in the world. And the same must be said of General Gouraud in Syria—the one-armed hero of Gallipoli who has established for himself throughout the Middle East the reputation of a successor of the early Crusaders, inspired by the same love for his Church and devotion to his country, and with the gentleness and charity of a missionary Saint.

These Catholic soldier-statesmen of France have inevitably shed a new luster upon the principles to which they have devoted their lives. They may not have converted other Frenchmen to their own ideas, but all those who have served under them speak of them not only with appreciation of their complete tolerance for opinions and conduct different from their own, but with a profound respect and admiration for the masters whom they have been proud to serve. They recognize and do not hesitate to proclaim, in every sphere of French society and politics, that these devout soldiers have done more for France than any of the politicians who tried to debar them from advancement in the past. And this much at least can be counted as definite gain: that the old anticlerical feuds are now recognized as having been the chief cause of France's

weakness, both by sowing the bitterest dissensions among Frenchmen while Germany was preparing to attack France, and by actually depriving France of the services of some of her noblest and most gifted children. Without taking any active part whatever in politics, without making speeches or entering into any discussions, apart from the purely military or administrative questions which fall within their own province, but simply by performing the tasks allotted to them with great ability and with generous devotion, these Catholic soldiers of France have within the past eight years done more than all the political propagandists to confound and discredit their former persecutors. They have convinced the mass of people all over France that the persecution of Catholics for their faith was not only unjust but criminally stupid.

More than this, their example has had a profound moral influence upon the young, and not only in the army, for the whole youth of France came under their influence during the war. All that is most patriotic in France has rallied behind them. In France, as in all belligerent countries, a large proportion of the young men have become instinctively pacifist through seeing too much of the horrible realities of war; yet they have none the less kept all their respect and admiration for the generals who saw as much of it as they did themselves, and who bore the enormous burden of responsibility throughout those unending years. Among the numerous leagues of ex-service men, which are usually regarded as the most militarist organizations in French politics, there is at least as full an appreciation of the work of Henri Barbusse or of the Breton war poet, Henry-Jacques, in depicting the atrocious brutality of war as there is in any other section of French public opinion. I have seen M. Henry-Jacques publicly embraced at a dinner party of literary "intel-

lectuals" by one of the principal founders of the *Ligue des Anciens Combatants,* for having helped to bring back that *"amour entre français"* which had been almost killed before the war; and if Marshal Foch had been present, even in that gathering of intellectuals and pacifists, he would certainly have received an ovation at that moment, whereas M. Clemenceau would probably have been treated with scorn.

For the great soldiers have won the hearts of the young generation in a way that the politicians can never achieve. They have the supreme advantage of being able to show an unbroken record of disinterested and honest public service. They can claim real achievement. And during the war they had on their side all the spontaneous impulse of youth towards action. They were the acknowledged and beloved leaders of hundreds of thousands of young men who trusted them with their own lives and with all they cared for most. And it is not surprising that their attitude towards the Catholic Church was directly influenced by that of the great soldiers whom they adored. An extraordinarily large proportion of the young men who made their names immortal by acts of heroism in the war were proud to proclaim themselves devout Catholics. The aviator Guynemer, for instance,—a pupil of the Collége Stanislas in Paris which has been kept in being by old friends of the Marist Fathers who founded and conducted it until their expulsion under the persecution drove them to found a similar college in Tokyo—has become almost a heroic figure in all the Catholic schools of France. He has become the type of the youthful warrior, fearless of all danger; and his name is much more widely remembered (there is an important street in the students' quarter of Paris named after him) than is that, for instance, of the English aviator Captain Ball. The

young poet Ernest Psichari also, who holds the same place in French memories of the war as does Rupert Brooke in England, was not only a devout and practising Catholic, but a religious mystic in his poetry. Both of them might have taken as their epitaph the motto of the Collége Stanislas, inscribed upon its own fine monument to more than a thousand of its former pupils killed in the war, *"français sans peur et chrétien sans reproche."*

There can be little doubt that when the war ended there was a strong tendency towards Catholicism among the young men who had been through it. It remains to be seen how far that tendency has since become organized and consolidated. Much of it was, quite naturally, aroused by the unusual emotionalism that war will always produce. But even though emotionalism may have been a large factor in producing the revival, that need not imply that the movement will not have gathered new and much more permanent sources of inspiration as it progressed. In any case it has had the effect of educating the young generation of France in a violent repugnance towards the anticlerical persecutions of the years which preceded the war. It has taught them to believe that, even though internal dissensions among Frenchmen may be inevitable, they must not be allowed to grow out of sectarian persecutions. Above all, they must not be caused by any renewal of that wholesale proscription of religious men solely because they believed in the Church, which before the war drove Foch from the Staff College and drove the religious orders from the schools that trained so many of the most devoted and heroic of the young men of France.

CHAPTER III

THE CLERGY

In one of the local weekly magazines which are published by many of the dioceses of France, I have before me an appeal to all young Frenchmen. It opens with the question: "Do you know, young man, that there is a shortage of priests in France?" And it proceeds by giving statistics which at first sight appear overwhelming. In twenty-five dioceses, it declares, one-third, or even one-half, of the parishes have no priest at all, and in sixty-nine dioceses the parish priests who are already over sixty years of age, are one-quarter, or one-third, or even one-half, of all the clergy. Closer examination makes the picture look even darker than it appears at first. For, if the priests who are over sixty make up so large a proportion of the whole clergy, the shortage will inevitably be much more acute in ten or twenty years' time, when practically all of them will be in their graves. More than 4,600 ecclesiastics were killed in the war, and this has naturally reduced the number of young priests very severely. Even apart from this terrible death roll, there are not nearly enough young priests to take the places of the senior priests, whose numbers will inevitably diminish rapidly before long—a fact which is quite evident to any one who frequents French churches. And the outlook is made apparently still more gloomy by the fact that the war killed off so many young men that the

number of young Frenchmen from whom the priesthood would naturally have been recruited during the past eight or ten years is much smaller than it ought normally to be.

Yet the amazing fact remains that the Church in France is far more confident of being able to maintain the numbers of its clergy now than it was before the war, even though there are few countries in the world, apart from those which are given over to famine, in which the clergy are so desperately ill provided for. After ten years of persecution and violence during the Revolution, the Church regained most of its liberties under Napoleon, who regarded the clergy as an indispensable adjunct to the "high police" of the State. "The People," he declared, "must have a religion, and this religion must be in the hands of the Government." For him, as the Vicomte d'Avenel expresses it, the priest was "a holy policeman, robed in a soutane, who was a much more effective agent of law and order than the policeman whose business was to repress sedition by force, and who took an oath of allegiance to the Government." Napoleon was determined to utilize the services of the clergy and of the police to supplement one another, and he had all French children taught in their catechisms that "we owe to Napoleon I, our Emperor, love, respect, obedience, fidelity, military service, and the tributes that are demanded for the defence of the Empire and of his throne. For it is he whom God has raised up . . ." This conception of an identity of social purpose between the Church and the State was, of course, not new, but Napoleon failed in his attempts to secure coöperation between them because he himself did not believe in the Church. Whereas Richelieu could say of the Pope that "we must kiss his feet and tie his hands," Napoleon failed because

he shared neither the spirit of the people nor that of the Church, and so had not the instinct necessary to arriving at a working agreement between both. The Church in France, on its side, naturally never regarded the complete toleration for all religions which became the accepted principle after the Revolution as reinstating it in its own former prerogatives. The property of the Church remained confiscated, and the State did no more than guarantee a bare living wage for the clergy.

When by the Law of Separation in 1905, the State finally repudiated even this last responsibility towards the Church, there were many, among laity and clergy alike, who believed that the anticlericals had at last given the Church in France its death blow. It was not any sentimental affection for the Church that had maintained this policy of subsidizing the clergy, even in Napoleon's time. He had made no secret of his own attitude when he declared that "a State has no more than a precarious authority so long as there are within its jurisdiction a body of men who exercise a great influence over the minds and the consciences of the people, and who do not belong to the State." It was only because the State believed the Church to be no longer formidable that it decided in 1905 to cease paying the subsidies which had previously been intended as a bribe to assure the loyalty of the clergy. The State was to find that the Pope, who had since Napoleon's time been shorn of all temporal power, had in fact become a far more formidable opponent than he had been a hundred years before. Freedom, and the strengthening of spiritual force and authority, that had resulted from the liberation of the Papacy from all temporal ties, were before long to have the same effect in strengthening the clergy in France after the separation, as they had after the loss of the temporal power in

Rome. The anticlericals who were so elated at their success and the clericals who despaired of the future were alike mistaken. "Rid of her shackles," as the Vicomte d'Avenel has finely said, "free, poor, and thrown upon her own resources, the Church appeared to the twentieth century democracy with the same appeal as it had appeared to Jerusalem on the morrow of the first Pentecost, when Peter, on the steps of the Temple, with no financial subsidies behind him, preached the Gospel for the first time."

A hundred years earlier the State had thought to starve the religious orders to death by confiscation and by depriving them of their revenues, and within a century Orders which had been left without homes or members or resources had been reëstablished and recruited as before. Louis-Philippe had ceased all subsidies to the smaller seminaries, and since 1885 the great seminaries have received none. After the withdrawal of these subsidies, the State completed its work by confiscating all the property and legacies that the Church had either acquired or received as endowments during the nineteenth century, with the result that many of the dioceses were dispossessed of their seminaries both large and small. To start new seminaries, they were obliged either to lease houses or to build new ones, and this was done with indomitable determination according to the resources of the different dioceses. The necessity of providing new buildings naturally caused dislocation and delay, which inevitably reduced the number of seminarists.

That the church has been able to keep its seminaries alive at all under such constant persecution, and in spite of such chronic insecurity, is indeed a marvelous tribute to the fidelity of the Catholics of France. But even apart from these persistent attacks, and this paralyzing un-

certainty as to whether each fresh attempt to keep the seminaries in existence would not be frustrated by some new measure of anticlerical legislation, the financial position of the clergy in modern France is so precarious as to deter all but the most saintly. The standard wage of a parish priest is no more than 900 francs a year (or roughly £1 a month in English money at the present rate of exchange), less, as M. d'Avenel points out, than that any sort of workingman, or of an artisan, or of a domestic servant; and even this scale of salary cannot be guaranteed in many of the dioceses. M. d'Avenel has collected some extremely remarkable information as to the payment of the clergy in a number of dioceses. He quotes the case of the Bishop of Dax, who had to call his parish priests together not long ago and tell them that he could not promise them more than 300 francs (about £4) a year in future. Not one of them murmured a protest, and were it not that their parishioners assist the clergy with gifts of food and the other necessaries of life, and that they receive assistance from other more fortunate dioceses, they would all have to live on dry bread and water. In several other dioceses the stipends of the clergy are scarcely larger than in that of Dax. In the diocese of Mende they receive only 475 francs a year, in Tulle 500 francs, in Cahors 600.

Taking the reports of all the dioceses from which he obtained information, M. d'Avenel finds that in fifty-one of them the clergy are still able to count upon the traditional stipend of 900 francs a year, which was paid to them by the State after Napoleon's Concordat, while in seventeen they are paid between 800 and 850 francs, and in seven, between 700 and 750. In ten dioceses they receive only 600 francs or less. These starvation wages, says M. d'Avenel, are therefore the exception, "and con-

sidering the difficulties that have to be surmounted in every reorganization, how long it takes to change the habits of a people to whom appeal has now to be made to levy a voluntary tax upon themselves, considering the utter destitution in which the Church was left at first, we are justified by what has already been accomplished in saying that she will in future be able to support the clergy as well as to maintain their numbers." Inevitably the destitution with which the clergy were faced after the Law of Separation had a powerfully deterrent influence upon parents who would otherwise have consented to let their sons enter the priesthood. People had good enough reasons for imagining that the clergy would in future have to go about begging for their daily bread; and particularly among the middle classes there was a general objection to allowing their sons to become priests. Signs of such a panic had already become apparent after the Law of Separation appeared likely to be enacted, and it was noticeable right up to 1909. The result was a serious shrinkage in the number of students in the seminaries, and the number of ordinations during the subsequent years diminished correspondingly. Nearly all over France the middle classes refused to allow their sons to enter the priesthood, and M. d'Avenel estimates that nine out of every ten young priests are still the sons of working-class families—sons of artisans or agricultural laborers, or even of the most destitute.

But many of these vocations were not thwarted altogether, and all over France the seminaries report the arrival of an unusually large proportion of seminarists of an age above the average. At the end of the war the seminaries began to fill up with young men who had held high rank in the army or had won exceptional decorations for valor. Some of them had been seminarists before

the war, and returned to be ordained—like the "flying padre" who was one of the "aces" of the French air service and had brought down a record number of German captive balloons, who not long ago left France after his ordination to join the French missions in the West Indies. There were older men also, like the late Colonel the Abbé de Coursan, who became ordained at the conclusion of a long, distinguished military career. But these soldier ecclesiastics were mostly young men still in their twenties. The large Parisian seminary at Issy (which takes the place of the old seminary of St. Sulpice) had fifty-five young officers among the eighty new aspirants for ordination at the opening of the academic year in October, 1920.

The report of the same seminary—which is still the principal training center for all the most promising ecclesiastical students in France—for the following year was equally remarkable. The seminary is now divided into two sections, one in the Rue du Regard, and the other at Issy. In the Rue du Regard there were fifty-seven pupils, of whom twenty-one were due for ordination to join the clergy of Paris. They were drawn from the provinces and from foreign countries as well as from Paris; but among the "belated" vocations of the Parisians there were a former sublieutenant, a naval engineer, twelve who had won the *Croix de Guerre,* one who had the *Médaille Militaire,* and one with the Legion of Honor, as well as a university fellow, a doctor of laws, and two bachelors of laws; while among the others were four sublieutenants, eight holders of the *Croix de Guerre,* and two of the *Médaille Militaire,* besides two bachelors of law and two bachelors of art, and an engineer from the school of Arts and Manufactures. At Issy there were pupils from the higher colleges, four from the Artillery School,

one from the Military College, one from the Naval College, and several from other professional colleges. The universities were also strongly represented among these candidates for ordination at Issy, with fellows, medical and legal doctors, bachelors of arts and of science, engineers and historical research students; while from the army there came a lieutenant colonel, two captains, five full lieutenants, twenty-three sublieutenants, besides various ex-officers from the Navy. The total of pupils in October, 1921, was 280 for Issy alone. As for the Catholic Young Men's Association, its annual report showed that 523 of its members had gone to be either priests or members of religious orders in the years 1921 and 1922.

Apart from this remarkable number of religious vocations among the men who saw military service in the war, there was a rapid influx of boy students into the seminaries while the war was still in progress. The reports quoted by M. d'Avenel are extremely interesting. Scarcely half of all the seminarists, he notes, usually become priests at the end of their studies, but their entire education and maintenance, which cost about 400 francs a year before the war and must cost more nearly 1,000 francs a year nowadays, has to be borne by the bishop of each diocese. The recent increase in the number of seminarists consequently involves a very heavy drain on the diocesan funds. But these new aspirants to the priesthood are welcomed with open arms. Even before the war, the number of clergy in France was far short of the requirements of the parishes. Many parishes indeed have no priest at all, or have only one; but most often this is the result of an amalgamation or rearrangement of small parishes which was the natural result of the depopulation of certain districts, whether through family limitation or

through emigration into the towns. The shortage of priests in the towns is particularly acute, but it is felt almost everywhere, since the war has killed off so many of the clergy and since the recruiting for the seminaries fell off so seriously about the time of the Law of Separation and after it. The effects of these losses will be felt for some time to come, but the large influx of new students into the seminaries during and since the war will gradually lessen the strain as the increase in the number of ordinations becomes noticeable.

In 1915 the important diocese of Amiens, for instance, had received so many new seminarists that it could count upon supplying even the smallest parishes with a priest. The diocese of Angers, which has to provide a large number of priests for the important Catholic secondary colleges and for the Catholic University of the West which is situated in the town, could even look forward to having more priests than it needed for all purposes. In Auch the small seminary which had only been established two years before the war, already had 60 pupils. Périgueux, Soissons and Langres had each doubled the number of their pupils within three years. Pamiers had 100 pupils in place of 35; Cahors, Perpignan and Valence each had 100 pupils, Digne and Nancy had 125, Belley had 132, and Versailles 320. Reims was full up with 150 pupils, and Albi was full up also. Nevers could count itself as self-supporting. Rennes was full to overflowing, Rouen had more students than ever before, and Marseilles was doing extremely well. At Toulouse the two recently restored small seminaries promise to supply all the local need for priests. At Orleans, Poitiers, Aix, Saint-Dié, Sées, Viviers Tarbes, and Saint-Flour, the number of vocations had regained its pre-war figure. Autun reported that it would soon have a very large

number of ordinations, and Lyons, with 45 ordinations a year, had recovered its average at the time of the Concordat. Laval complained that it had only just enough priests for its local needs, but this diocese is well-known as a recruiting ground for the missions and the religious orders.

Such a consensus of optimism gives reason to hope that in most of the French dioceses there will be no further lack of priests within a few years. In the meantime a large proportion of the clergy all over France come from certain districts where the Catholic tradition has always remained most strong. Western Brittany, the small diocese of Tarentaise in Savoy, and the diocese of Mende in the Limousin provide a constant surplus of priests who go out to assist in other dioceses. In the center, particularly around Tours and Troyes, there are little more than half the number of priests and seminarists needed, but there are signs of improvement even in such districts, where the Church had been reduced to the sorest plight. Thus, at La Rochelle, when the large seminary had to be closed down after the Law of Separation had led most prosperous families to refuse their permission to boys who desired to become priests, there were already over 70 pupils in the small seminaries in 1915.

These results are, of course, partly attributable to the earnest appeals for recruits to the priesthood which have been issued repeatedly in recent years by nearly all the members of the hierarchy. And while devoting themselves to the teaching of young men with religious vocations, the bishops have had to intensify their efforts to raise the funds out of which the clergy have to be supported, and which must offer some sort of hope of a reasonable, if very modest, standard of life for the clergy in future years. When the State ceased to pay its

previous subsidies to the various religious denominations, each church had to organize its own collection of funds for the payment of its clergy. The French Protestants formed 850 associations to collect for the support of their clergy, who number rather less than a thousand in all, and were able to raise over three million francs a year, as compared with less than two million which they formerly received from the State.

The Catholics, it must be said, have not contributed on at all so generous a scale. The explanation consists partly in the fact that the French Protestants are mostly concentrated in important towns, and that many of them are very rich and have great political and social influence. But it remains true that the Catholics have not yet become accustomed to giving largely to the support of their clergy, and it is a constant astonishment to any foreign visitor to French churches to see how little is put in the collection plate during mass even by the well-to-do. In the country churches, it is only exceptional persons who put even a half-franc note in the plate, and one very frequently sees expensively dressed shopkeepers with their children giving only a few pence or even half-pence. Even in Paris, the usual contribution to the collection is in sous, and anything more than a franc note is seldom to be seen. This reluctance to give freely in the weekly collections is in fact a national habit: it contrasts very remarkably for instance with the crowded English Protestant Church attached to the British Embassy in Paris, wherein the Sunday collection five-franc notes are almost the smallest offering that any well dressed person habitually gives. There is, of course, a wide difference between the prosperity of the English congregation at the Embassy Church, and even of the most fashionable of the Paris churches. Most of them indeed are frequented

by very poor congregations, and even the comfortable French bourgeois are less in a position to be generous than are the English colony in Paris. It is undeniable, however, that the practice of the well-to-do French families in regard to these church collections is anything but generous. The result is of course that in many dioceses the clergy are left very poor indeed. An inter-diocesan fund has been founded to relieve the extreme indigence of some of the poorer dioceses—for a large population in a diocese most often means a very poor congregation and very heavy expenditure. A number of the bishops have nowadays adopted the custom of publishing a diocesan balance sheet every year, and this has usually encouraged larger subscriptions. The amount collected varies enormously in the different parts of the country. In the diocese of Digne it was only 70,000 francs before the war; it was 700,000 in Arras and 600,000 in Saint-Brieuc. Bourges, which is in the anti-clerical center of France, used to collect 400,000 francs a year, which was considerably above the average, but 300,000 francs a year collected at Orleans was below the average. But all over the country the amount collected for this *"denier du culte,"* as it is called, was increasing more or less steadily in the ten years before the war. In La Rochelle, for instance, the collections mounted from 160,000 francs in 1906 to 194,000 in 1909, and to 232,000 in 1913.

The cost of living and the varying prosperity of different parts of France have altered so much since the war that the more recent figures are scarcely worth quoting since they can convey no standard of comparison. The proportion of practising Catholics in each part of the country is so variable, and their social or economic position also, that it is useless to calculate any average for the

whole of France. Some dioceses where the congregations contribute considerably more per head than do the richer congregations elsewhere, are so weak in numbers that they have to be heavily subsidized from the interdiocesan fund. But in any case as M. d'Avenel points out, these collections for the maintenance of the clergy have at least done no injury to the finances of the various good works throughout the country. They are in most cases fully as well provided for as they were at the time of the Concordat, while many new works of charity have been established and maintained in the meantime. There are dioceses in which the collections for the Propagation of the Faith, of the Holy Childhood, and of Peter's Pence between them raise more than 100,000 francs a year, while there are others which support at least 400 Catholic schools, although the stipends of the clergy have had to be reduced by nearly half.

In almost every diocese these Catholic schools—usually several hundreds of them—are maintained out of the money collected in the diocese, which would otherwise be available for the clergy. Consequently, the wages of the clergy are only a part of the general expense of religious organization. They are, however, often assisted in various ways—by the gifts of food or clothing or fuel or furniture from their parishioners which in most places are made regularly at certain important festivals of the year, in accordance with long-standing tradition. Another important subsidy is in some places paid to them as well, in the form of camouflaged charges upon the rates—for alleged services in connection with the upkeep of cemeteries or of the church bells, or other services which figure in the municipal records as civil charges, but which every one knows to be a recognized form of subsidy to the clergy. Such subsidies are naturally infrequent,

and it is only in districts where the popular desire to support the clergy is very strong, that the prefects dare not interfere to stop the practice. Of course, the priests also have their regular fees for Masses and for the various religious ceremonies. The fee for Masses, which before the war was 1½ or two francs, has now been raised by an agreement among the hierarchy to four or five francs. Even so, the clergy of modern France may well say—as M. d'Avenel puts it—that they practically have to take a vow of poverty as though they were all becoming monks. "They live in a miserable way," he continues, "but they live as free men, devoted to their apostleship; and their voluntary acceptance of such miserable conditions of life gives them a halo of which they may well be proud among our countrymen who have little taste for a régime of dry bread."

In the more Catholic parts of France the clergy can now even say that the Church is actually in a stronger financial position than it was before the Separation: they are no longer regarded as public officials whom the State is obliged to pay, and a sense of direct responsibility for their maintenance makes their congregations subscribe and give much more liberally than of old. The State is moreover under present conditions the landlord of all the churches, so that the clergy as tenants have no taxes or rates to pay for their sacred buildings, and can insist upon the necessary repairs being paid by the State in its capacity as landlord. This advantage has been of enormous value in the case of the old churches and cathedrals which are classed as historical monuments and are placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Fine Arts; and the fact that the State has been obliged to pay for the upkeep and the restoration of many magnificent old buildings like the Benedictine Monastery on the Mont St.

Michel (the State is of course able to raise the money in such cases by charging a fee for admission which the religious orders could never have exacted) may yet be an immense blessing in disguise, even though it has involved their being temporarily closed to public worship.

In the matter of endowments, however, the clergy are still at a terrible disadvantage. But even here the ingenuity and the devotion of the Catholic population have gradually found means of circumventing the law, so that legacies and donations are actually made to the bishop or to the religious orders in devious ways. Once the present negotiations for the establishment of diocesan associations under the jurisdiction of the bishops have been successfully conducted to accomplishment, this paralyzing disability of the clergy will also be removed.

Indeed, by one of the most curious evolutions of modern jurisprudence, the Church has already acquired, as a direct result of the Law of Separation, a practical sanction for her authority in religious matters such as no priest—and least of all the authors of the Law of Separation—would ever have thought of proposing. The late Professor Bureau has examined, with full documentary evidence, the effects in practice of the Law of Separation, and the result of the law in every case where it has been tested—until there can be no further question of testing it—has been, in M. Bureau's words "almost comically unexpected." "These investigations," he wrote, "all lead to the same ultimate result, that in every sort of case the rights of orthodoxy and of the hierarchy obtain rapidly and without difficulty the most complete ratification, and nowhere do we find any undesirable infringement whatever on the part of the secular power in the litigation which has come before the courts. This ratification of the Church's rights is so spontaneous and

so unequivocal that I might almost have given as a subtitle to this book 'A Record of the Invariable Successes That the Catholic Church Has Won in the Courts of France.' The cause of religion emerges victorious every time that it has real right on its side, and even in some instances in which an abuse of the Church's power could be suspected or even demonstrated. It overcomes alike the resistance of the unbelievers, of those who are in revolt against it, and of those among the faithful who go astray. At no time is its constitution imperiled. And in particular we have to note that the recognition, for the benefit of the faithful, of a personal and distinct right to the free use of the churches has had no undesirable reaction upon the relations between the faithful and their clergy. The politicians and publicists who were a few years ago so anxiously insisting upon the danger of introducing lay influences into the Church would seem to have taken too little account of the power of those forces within the Church itself which would always have preserved it from such influences, no matter how strong were the sympathies or the encouragements that they received from outside. History indeed will have to decide whether their excessive apprehensions of this remote danger have not actually been responsible for exposing the Catholic Church to other more serious and more fatal suspicions."

M. Bureau, it will be seen, was convinced from his own investigations of the operation of the Law of 1905, that the vehement opposition with which the proposal for the *"associations culturales"* was received, was not only exaggerated but deplorable in its results. The facts as he presents them are so remarkable that they deserve to be briefly noted. He shows how, in the isolated cases in different parts of France where an attempt was made to

found the diocesan associations provided for by the Law of 1905, in defiance of Pope Pius X and of their absolute repudiation by the French bishops, the French courts actually upheld the Church in every case against these schismatic associations. The most striking instance occurred in the diocese of Arras, when early in 1909 the Abbé Jouy, who had been parish priest of the Church of Sains-le-Pressin since 1889, joined with the mayors of two communes in his parish and formed a religious association in conformity with the act of 1905. The priest was first suspended and then deprived of his faculties by the bishop, who at once appointed the Abbé Galoin to take his place. The newly appointed parish priest found himself shut out by his predecessor from the church, and the bishop had to appeal first to the two mayors (who naturally refused to give him satisfaction), then to the prefect, and finally to the *Conseil d'État* to have the suspended priest removed in favor of the Abbé whom he had appointed to take his place.

Naturally this became a test case, for the insurgent priest could not have been in a stronger position, and the bishop's case was simply a plea that he alone had the right to decide who was the duly accredited clergyman in charge of a parish in his diocese. After prolonged consideration the *Conseil d'État* delivered its judgment in August, 1911, deciding emphatically in favor of the bishop. A whole series of similar judgments,—including several instances in which priests suspended for one reason or another by their bishops had tried to invoke the Law of Separation to justify their remaining in charge of parishes, after forming these associations provided for by the law—are cited in detail by M. Bureau and they all result in the same way. Each court of appeal recognizes in favor of each parish priest the "right of

internal discipline" over his church, and the right of the recognized ecclesiastical authorities to decide who is or who is not to be regarded as the properly appointed parish priest. This effect of the law was so different from what its authors had intended that M. Briand, as the responsible minister in the Cabinet, wrote to the Supreme Court of Appeal to ask them to reconsider their judgment. By their very determination to create an absolute separation between Church and State, the authors of the law had compelled the courts to consider themselves as powerless to challenge ecclesiastical authority within its own sphere. They had reduced all such issues to the simple test question of whether any individual Catholic, be he priest or layman, was or was not acting in conformity with the requirements of his superiors. If he was in revolt, then—no matter how arguable his case might be —he was *ipso facto* no longer to be counted among the body of the congregation. Unless the priest has actually exceeded his powers and interfered in civil matters, his authority can no longer be questioned. By the first article of the Law of 1905 "the Republic guarantees the free exercise of religion," which means, as M. Bureau puts it, that "we are free either to adhere to the Catholic Church or not to adhere to it; but we are not free if we do adhere to it, to repudiate any essential principle of its organic life."

The protection of the Church is all the more effective because any religious congregation assembled for public worship naturally constitutes a public meeting, and the right to protection from interference at such meetings applies absolutely to religious celebrations, alike against those who take part in them and against any outsiders who may choose to attend. What is more, this legal recognition of the incontestable supremacy of religious

discipline within the Church must now apply not only to the laity in their relations with the clergy but to the clergy in their relations with their bishops and even to the bishops in relation to the Pope. It is an astonishing paradox, but the literal truth, that if any one of the French bishops should decide to repudiate the edicts of the Pope, even if he were to attempt the establishment of the religious associations expressly designed by the Law of 1905, the French courts would be obliged to regard him as being no longer a bishop and to recognize his successor appointed by the Pope. The police, and if necessary the military, would have to be sent down at the request of the Pope's nominee to drive out any bishop who tried to disobey his instructions, even if he were acting according to the Law of 1905. "It is a surprising situation," says M. Bureau, "to find that in deference to orthodoxy itself, and to the ordinances of the hierarchy, our magistrates actually exclude from the free use of the churches all priests who are in revolt against their bishops, and all freethinkers who hold no religious belief, while they do not even attempt to inquire whether these very principles of orthodoxy or these instructions of the bishops have been scrupulously respected by the religious authorities who claim to apply them."

The truth is, as M. Bureau insists, that this absurd paradox is the fault of the anticlericals themselves, who tried in sheer vindictiveness against the Church to create an artificial separation under the laws of France between the administration of the Church and the ordinary life of the people, with which it is inextricably interwoven. Their policy broke down in practice simply because it was out of all conformity to the facts of French life. The clergy are fast winning back their position as one of the recognized social authorities in France. Their in-

fluence has grown enormously, instead of dying out. There are few official ceremonies in any part of France to which the clergy are not nowadays expressly invited, and the prefect or mayor who failed to invite the bishop or any important local ecclesiastic on an important occasion would soon regret his incivility—less from the natural resentment of the clergy than from a sense of outraged decency among his own people. Cardinal Dubois and the other bishops in Paris are nowadays regularly included in the invitations to the Palace of the President of the Republic. The great churchmen are regarded as, and honored among, the most illustrious sons of France. And while the clergy are now invited everywhere to take part in public and national celebrations or gatherings, the civil authorities on their side freely assert their sympathy for the work that the clergy are doing. It was an incident that scarcely attracted comment the other day, but which would have probably brought down the ministry before the war—had it even been thinkable in those days —when M. Bonnevay, as *Garde-des-Sceaux* and second in command in the Cabinet, went to distribute the schoolboys' prizes at the Collége Stanislas in Paris—a school which was founded and conducted by the Marists, until they were forbidden to teach in France since when they have had to transfer their activities to Tokyo.

Such are the conditions under which the clergy have to face their immense task of bringing back vitality to the Church in France. The spirit that animates the hierarchy to-day has changed considerably with the gradual disappearance of older memories, since the proposed civil constitution of the Church contained in the Law of Separation eighteen years ago was met with an absolute refusal. Like every other religious community, the Church in France has found that the freedom it gains

by disestablishment is much more than worth the price. The clergy have acquired a new inspiration, they have gained even new material resources as well as a vast increase in their moral prestige and authority, by going out bravely into the wilderness. It may be doubted whether the majority of them would now accept their old dependence upon the State, or even contemplate sacrificing their complete independence in exchange for the material security that they had of old. A new generation of priests views the world with a different outlook, and is inspired by a renewed apostolic zeal. Most of them belong by birth to the poorest classes in the nation and they are consequently, as M. d'Avenel wisely remarks, "in a strong position for going out among the people, that people that is so defiant, so passionately attached to its desire for equality; and for working their healing influence among them in the near future when the misunderstandings that have divided Democracy and the Church shall have disappeared."

That indeed is the vision that inspires the great majority of the leaders in the Catholic social movement in France. Like the late Professor Bureau, they point to the times of anticlerical persecution within the past century and a half as the periods which have brought a new zeal, a new consciousness of the apostolic mission, to the Church. They almost dread a return of prosperity for fear that the new energy and vitality may slacken once the need for it is removed. M. Bureau looks above all for a return to the gospel of *"la morale intégrale"* of early Christianity. He deplores the traditional estrangement between Democracy and Religion, and bases all his hopes upon their reconciliation. "Rarely," he wrote in the end of his brilliant study of the first fifteen years' experience of the Act of Separation, "has there been a time more

favorable for an apostolate devoted to the revival alike of the Church and of France; if the Catholics will only be ready to understand the conditions of its success and to undertake the joyful tasks that it implies—above all if they will have the wisdom to hold aloof from political combinations and from the fallacious pretenses of a conservatism that is derived from selfishness or from fear." And he quotes with special emphasis the words of the late Cardinal Farrata, a former Papal Nuncio in Paris, which have for obvious reasons received little publicity in France. "In France," wrote the Cardinal, "the mass of the people are indifferent in all but a few of its departments; and to hope for a popular rising of these indifferent masses on any religious question has always been, and always will be, an illusion. If such a revolt on behalf of religion is ever to be hoped for and deserved, it can only be done through care for the soul of France, by devoting the attention of the clergy to the masses, by going among them, by uprooting the prejudices against religion, by bringing the healing influences of religion down to the deep lairs of the common people."

CHAPTER IV

CHURCH AND STATE

THERE is, I believe, a general impression outside of France that the attitude of the Government towards the Church has completely changed, and that instead of being fiercely anticlerical, the French Governments since the end of the war have been and still are definitely pro-clerical. It should be said at once that any such impression is a gross exaggeration of the facts. Little more can be said than that the old anticlerical persecutions of the Church have ceased since the beginning of the war, and that during the past eight or nine years the Catholics have been organizing and consolidating their defensive positions in every direction. They have even secured one or two definite and important gains, the most conspicuous of them being that diplomatic relations with the Vatican have been restored. Since 1921 there has been a Papal Ambassador in Paris in the person of Mgr. Ceretti, who is one of the most gifted diplomats in the Church. There has likewise been a French Ambassador at the Vatican, in the person of M. Jonnart, Senator for the Pas-de-Calais and a former Governor of Northern Africa, who is also the Chairman of the Suez Canal Company. Like Mgr. Ceretti, M. Jonnart is one of the most distinguished figures in contemporary diplomacy. His reputation stands exceptionally high in France, and he is always spoken of as a man who, had it not been for

one accident or another, was obviously destined to become President of the Republic. His selection for the Vatican Embassy shows therefore that the position is regarded with fitting respect by the French Government. On the other hand, Mgr. Ceretti has automatically resumed the traditional position of the Vatican's Ambassadors in Paris as doyen or leader of the diplomatic corps. When a new Government is formed, or on the national festivals and other occasions when all the foreign Ambassadors in Paris go in state to present their respects to the President of the Republic, it is Mgr. Ceretti who acts as their spokesman by virtue of his traditional seniority of rank.

All this indeed appears excellent, and the official propaganda of the French Foreign Office has been busy in utilizing such facts and such ceremonies to create the impression that all friction or misunderstandings between the Church and the State in France are at an end. M. Jonnart's own personal record, for instance, is cited as a remarkable proof of the changed attitude of French politicians. For M. Jonnart was one of these who voted with Emile Combes for the severance of diplomatic relations. M. Briand, who appointed M. Jonnart, is quoted as a still more dramatic instance of conversion. For M. Briand was the *"rapporteur"* or draftsman of the Law of Separation which terminated the old diplomatic relations with Rome, and it is he who, as Prime Minister after the war, has carried the law to reëstablish them. Obviously times have changed greatly when such things are done in defiance of the politician's natural desire to vindicate his political consistency. And as for Emile Combes, he is no longer there. He died on the very day that his former supporter, M. Jonnart, set out

for Rome from Paris, to assume his duties as Ambassador to the Vatican under the new régime.

There is no denying the dramatic significance of all these facts. But what have they actually meant for the Church in France? The death of M. Combes, in his quiet retirement at a very advanced age, was overdue in any case. The restoration of relations with the Vatican may mean little or it may yet mean a great deal. The mere establishment of an Embassy in each city is a comparatively small matter. But the "conversion" of men like M. Jonnart and M. Briand may be an enormous advance if their conversion is really genuine, and if it is not a mere concession to a temporary reaction of public opinion in favor of the Church. That is the crucial question. Undoubtedly there was a strong wave of public sympathy with the clergy after the war. The *Bloc National,* which swept the country at the elections of November, 1919, was a union of all those parties and tendencies in politics which pledged themselves to a program of "reconstruction and reconciliation" in France. And reconciliation meant primarily a truce on all questions affecting the Church. The pre-war dissensions, which had left France unprepared for war through preoccupation with internal controversies, were mainly the result of the fierce vendetta against the Church that was being pursued by the parties of the Left. And when the war ended, every one except a certain number of professional politicians hoped devoutly that the old feuds were never to arise again. The heroism of the clergy was generally recognized, and most people, who felt a deep personal gratitude to the mobilized priests and to the army chaplains for the consolation that they had given, in risking their lives under shell fire, to the dying

and wounded during four years, were honestly ashamed, and frequently said so, of the persecution that had driven so many of the clergy into exile before the war. So the vast majority of the freshly returned deputies after the elections of 1919, among whom were nearly 250 who had never sat in Parliament before, came to the Chamber either as convinced proclericals or with the knowledge that their constituents were overwhelmingly in favor of reconciliation with the Church.

Such was the atmosphere in which the present *Chambre des Députés* assembled, more than three years ago. That it would vote for a resumption of diplomatic relations with the Vatican was a foregone conclusion. The question would probably have been more doubtful if there had been no immediate necessity to deal with it. But it presented itself as an urgent problem in foreign politics. The Vatican had become one of the most important diplomatic centers in the whole world, in the closing years of the war and during the Versailles Peace Conference. Every other important country was represented there except France. Even Protestant countries like England and the United States had found it indispensable to have a spokesman at the Papal Court.

Of all countries France had most need of direct representation there. The dissolution of Germany's colonial empire, and the distribution of the Middle East between England and France intimately involved the question of protection for the Christian missionaries who were the main agents of European civilization both in Asia and in Africa. If France alone persisted in refusing to acknowledge the Papal court, she could not expect that the Pope would support her claims to territories which she desired to administer. So, when General Castelnau and his ex-soldier fellow novices in the Chamber

began to press for this formal reconciliation with the Vatican, in the name of all the French army chaplains and soldier priests who had fought or died for France, their pleading was reinforced by the purely political arguments of a new generation of politicians like M. Loucheur, who cared nothing for what the old anticlericals might have said or believed in the past. They demanded as a matter of plain common sense that France should not be excluded from a diplomatic nerve center where all France's rivals and enemies were actively engaged. Others like Senator de Monzie argued that France ought to be represented everywhere, merely as a matter of self-defence: that she should have an envoy at the Vatican and another in Moscow without delay. M. Briand, interpreting this general consensus of opinion, brought forward and carried the law restoring the diplomatic connection with the Vatican, and explained that the Papal Court must now be regarded as one of the most important listening posts in the world's diplomacy. And partly from reasons of self-interest, partly out of gratitude for what the clergy had done in the war, partly with a sense of making amends for past injustice, the Chamber passed the bill, and sent M. Jonnart to the Vatican.

Mgr. Ceretti, who had already been able to prepare the ground when he was in Paris for a considerable period as the Pope's special private representative during the Versailles Conference, now came back as Papal Ambassador. The new régime began to show results almost at once. Very soon after his arrival the Pope had to appoint a new Archbishop of Bagdad, where French missionaries have for centuries succeeded to the See, but where a delicate situation had arisen since the war through the political changes that have now placed Mesopotamia under English jurisdiction. Had France persisted in

refusing to restore diplomatic relations, it would scarcely have been surprising if the Pope should take the new situation thus created into account in appointing the new Archbishop. As it was, Mgr. Ceretti was able to inform the French Government that the See was to be filled by a French Dominican, Mgr. Berré. He had been for years one of the outstanding missionary figures in Syria and during the war had been made a prisoner by the Turks and had kept the spirit of his community alive by exemplary devotion under the severest trials. It was a fortunate and timely instance of what friendship with the Vatican might be worth to France. Other incidents followed rapidly, and on each occasion the masterly and speedy diplomacy of Mgr. Ceretti, intervening directly at Rome with tact and decision, either produced an unexpectedly gratifying appointment to some vacant position or else some felicitous settlement of an incipient controversy that in pre-war days would have set all the Press in a storm.

The French Government was delighted at finding how much more quickly and smoothly questions could be settled by this personal contact with the Vatican, while the friendly dispositions of the Pope could not be doubted. One incident after another showed his friendship—not least, for instance, the Cardinalate conferred upon Mgr. Charost, although he was one of the junior members of the French hierarchy. He had gained a unique popularity in France for the protests which he issued while a hostage in German hands against the shameful deportation of girls and children from Lille. And in Rome itself the personal relations between His Holiness and M. Jonnart could not have been more cordial. M. Jonnart has testified to his great benevolence

towards France again and again, and has repeatedly declared that the more completely the decision of diplomatic questions concerning France rests with the Pope's personal direction, the more confident will he be of a settlement satisfactory to France.

M. Jonnart's statements in this sense have usually been made with special reference to the negotiations which are now nearing completion, for the new constitution of the Church in France. As the negotiations have generally been enveloped in secrecy and an official *démenti* has always been issued whenever indiscreet revelations of their progress have been made by "inspired" journalists in the French press, I cannot venture here upon any discussion in detail of the new *"Statut de l'Eglise"* which has been elaborated during the past two years. It is generally known, however, that the final draft of the agreement drawn up between Mgr. Ceretti and the French Government's representatives was ready last summer for transmission to Rome. An early decision was indeed expected soon after the dispatch of this document, but there has been considerable delay over it. The Pope has felt it necessary to take the final decision largely into his own hands, having first received a report made after thorough investigation by the Extraordinary Commission for Ecclesiastical Affairs at Rome. The technical complications of the question made it impossible for His Holiness to master all its details without proper attention, and his work at it has inevitably been interrupted several times by more immediately urgent preoccupations. If M. Jonnart's frequent declarations are to be taken seriously, however, as well as the recurring statements in an important provincial newspaper in his constituency with which he is known to have close personal relations, there

is little doubt that the agreement formulated by Mgr. Ceretti and the Government will be adopted substantially as it was sent to Rome.

Broadly speaking, it provides for the creation of "diocesan associations" in each diocese of France, upon which would be conferred the legal status that the Church at present lacks. At the time of the Laws of Separation the anticlerical Government proposed to constitute a system of diocesan corporations which were to control the civil rights of the Church in France. This proposal was absolutely and irreconcilably opposed by Pope Pius X on the ground that they were of a nature incompatible with the maintenance of authority within the Church. They were to be formed more or less on the same lines as any democratically elected body in political affairs, and the real control of the Church's property and legal rights as well as the appointment of the clergy, would thus have been vested in the hands of a lay assembly in each diocese. Obviously the principles of such a constitution could never have been made acceptable, and as the Church refused to accept it, the Church has been left without any legal status ever since. Mgr. Ceretti has set himself with a zeal and a capacity for rapid work that has filled his anticlerical opponents with fury, to remedy this anomalous situation by securing a constitution for the Church once and for all. As the nature of the proposals now under consideration at Rome is an open secret, it may be said roughly that the diocesan associations which it is now proposed to set up are based on a fundamentally different principle. Instead of being compulsorily established democratic bodies controlling the clergy, the new associations will be more in the nature of coöperative societies, each formed under the presidency of the bishop in a diocese. The bishop is not even obliged to set up

such an association. But if he does so, he is ex-officio to become its president, and the association will be subject to his authority in all essentially ecclesiastical matters.

While these negotiations have been in progress, the Government has been making small concessions here and there in the direction of restoring religious liberty in France, and has followed up the resumption of relations with the Vatican by itself showing a certain amount of sympathy towards public demonstrations of a Catholic nature. Perhaps the most significant of them was the decision to take part officially in the religious celebrations on the festival of Ste. Jeanne d'Arc. Here also the obviously popular appeal of a great Catholic festival left the Government in a ludicrous position if it continued to hold aloof from them. Before the war, when the royalists of the *Action Française* had first organized these patriotic demonstrations throughout the streets of Paris, they were forbidden by the police to hold them, and many of the young *Camelots du Roi* went to prison after violent conflicts with the troops or the police in their efforts to reach the statue of Jeanne d'Arc. But when Jeanne d'Arc was canonized at Rome, and all over the world people prayed to her as the most romantic of all patriotic saints, it was scarcely possible for the French Government to persist in its former attitude of disdain. The *Bloc National* voted that the Government was to take part officially in the celebrations; and so the President now lays his wreath at the foot of the golden statue in the Rue de Rivoli, and the public buildings of the city are all illuminated at night on her festival day.

The decision that the President of the Republic should take part officially in the celebrations dates only from 1921; but, as M. Maurras, the political editor of the *Action Française,* points out, it was M. Poincaré who

first reëstablished the right to hold the demonstration, when he was Prime Minister in 1912. "Until then," declares M. Maurras, "when we tried to do what we do now, when we went publicly and in a regular procession to lay wreaths and crowns at the statues of France's Patron Saint, we had to fight for it. And it was not with criminals and anarchists that we had to fight; it was with the police that the young men had to deal, and they were sentenced altogether to some 10,000 days of imprisonment, getting nothing but calumny for their patriotism in performing this public duty. Jeanne d'Arc had arranged against her the whole constituted authority, all the public bodies and all the official forces of the country! Such was the conception of France's history that was held by MM. Fallières, Briand, Caillaux, and even Clemenceau—for it was against M. Clemenceau that we had to fight in 1908-1909. The whole world has moved on since then. But it is M. Poincaré who must be given the credit of having been the first to repudiate that party policy which could take account of everything but France.

Other significant events may be noted that show a similar spirit to that which induced the Government to take part in the Jeanne d'Arc festivals. There have been various minor incidents in which for special reasons, and always keeping scrupulously within the laws passed against the Church, the Government has made small concessions. One of the most remarkable of these concessions occurred last autumn when it decided to throw open the ancient monastery, built by the Benedictines many centuries ago, on the Mont St. Michel for religious ceremonies on certain days of the year. Here also the Government could scarcely have done less; and only an appreciation of how much it dreads a revival of the old anticlericalism, will explain why the Government did not

go very much further. The Mont St. Michel is one of the marvels of western Europe. At the innermost corner of a great land-locked bay that has one of its sides in Normandy and the other in Brittany, there rises a solitary rock more than a mile out from the shore which is accessible only at low tide. On this rock, one of the early Breton solitaries built a little primitive shrine in honor of St. Michael in the eighth century, and the shrine before long gave to the lonely rock the name of St. Michael's Mount. It became a place of pilgrimage for all Normandy and Brittany, and the Benedictines, settling there, built on it out of red sandstone one of the most perfect of Norman monasteries. Its beauty, as a masterpiece of architecture, became known far and wide, and added greatly to the popularity of the pilgrimages that constantly flocked to it.

Throughout the Crusades the Knights used to come and ask St. Michael's blessing there before they set out to the East, and throughout the Middle Ages it was the center of continuous pilgrimages from all parts of Europe. The Benedictines remained in the monastery even when the rock became turned into a fortress, which was many times besieged. When the French Revolution came, the monks were driven out, and the monastic buildings were converted into a public prison. To this day the Benedictines have never been allowed to go back to it. On several occasions, however, the church itself has since that time been restored to public worship, and the present Government has now once more thrown it open for ecclesiastical ceremonies, but only on certain days of the year. Otherwise it is preserved as a national monument, which is visited by literally hundreds of thousands of tourists every year. The traditional pilgrimages to it have never ceased, especially on the festival days associated with St. Michael;

and when Mgr. Ceretti came to inaugurate its solemn restoration to religious worship on last Michaelmas Day, dense crowds for miles around thronged across the sandy stretches that surround it as they have done in pilgrimages for twelve centuries.

Yet even this small concession to religious sentiment was not granted by the Government without considerable trepidation and much consultation beforehand. Any one who knows the intensity of popular affection for the Mont St. Michel pilgrimages throughout Brittany and Normandy is astonished at the fact that a central government in Paris should have been able to frustrate a popular demand for so long. And the jubilation throughout the Catholic press at the mere concession of the right to use the ancient church on a few solemn occasions each year shows how severe has been the tyranny under which the Church in France has now suffered for long years. No less remarkable, and indeed pitiful, is the chorus of anticipatory pleasure that has found expression in the Catholic press at the Government's proposal—which has not even yet become law—to hand back the old buildings of the St. Sulpice seminary in Paris to the Archbishop of Paris. Here too, the measure of restitution offered appears grotesquely inadequate. The Sulpicians, who had created one of the most celebrated centers of ecclesiastical learning and education in the whole world, were banished from their homes. Their buildings were declared State property, and the Government has since used them to house a section of the overgrown Treasury Department. The Church has for long agitated to have them returned—not as a mere matter of right but as an exchange for other buildings elsewhere which would suit the Government just as well, and perhaps better. A refusal of such offers of exchange by definitely anticlerical

Governments was intelligible enough. They knew the sentimental value of the old buildings to the Church, and they were determined for that reason to keep the Church from getting them back. But a government which is supposed to be friendly to the Church might surely be expected to act differently. Yet M. Poincaré's Government has not dared to take any such responsibility. After long negotiation it has gone to its entire length of concession by introducing a bill into Parliament to obtain sanction for the exchange of property, which it formally proposes and recommends. That much alone is regarded by the Catholics in contemporary France as being an immense achievement. And there has been such a fury of controversy over the mere proposal, in the anticlerical press, that the Government's hesitation can be readily understood.

Even in this question of granting permission for the seminary of St. Sulpice to be reopened, so that the seminarists who have been temporarily housed at Issy may come back to the center of University life in Paris, the Government has had to be powerfully urged to show benevolence towards the Church by the exigencies of foreign politics. Naturally the Vatican—and behind the Vatican, the whole Catholic opinion of the world—has been making strong representations as to the desirability of accepting Cardinal Dubois' offer of an exchange of buildings. And Mgr. Ceretti has shown that the friendship of the Vatican can be a very substantial asset in international affairs, well worth the price of making restitution for injustice, still more worth while considering when it is only a question of accepting a favorable business deal. But besides this naturally interested pressure from the Vatican there has been a further consideration, which affects the whole policy of the French Gov-

ernment towards the teaching orders and which is gradually forcing it to face some little risk of unpopularity with the anticlericals for higher reasons of French prestige throughout the world. The preamble to the Government's bill proposing the return of St. Sulpice to Cardinal Dubois sets forth in detail the representations made by Cardinal Bourne and by the Scottish hierarchy who protested that the existing facilities for ecclesiastical education at Issy are not what they used to be when the clerical students lived in the heart of the students' quarter of Paris, within immediate reach of every important public library. Like other extremely influential Church dignitaries in different parts of the world, Cardinal Bourne is himself a former pupil of St. Sulpice, and he made representations to the effect that he would be reluctantly obliged to send fewer of his students to Paris in future if the present conditions are not so remedied as to give equal facilities to those which are enjoyed by ecclesiastical students in other capitals. The Scottish bishops went so far as to ask that the bursaries which they have held for centuries at St. Sulpice should pay back the funds held in trust for them. It is not difficult to believe that such grave representations, made for no political purpose but made from a strict attention to the requirements of clerical education, and coming simultaneously from the heads of the Catholic Church in various countries, have had a profound effect upon the attitude of the French Government. As M. René Pinon, the political editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* puts it very clearly, Paris is no longer one of the great centers of the world's religious education. Cardinal Gibbons was an old student at St. Sulpice; but the future Cardinals will be old students of colleges in Rome, in Louvain, or in German centers like Cologne. The loss of influence

that this means for France is easily imagined. The Government is in fact beginning to realize that, at a time when France is being misrepresented throughout the world, and when propaganda to meet her accusers is urgently needed, the continued proscription of her religious orders is depriving her of the most successful and the most devoted of her own propagandists. It is moreover giving France a bad name throughout the countries that are friendly to the Church; while the supply of novices for the missionary orders is actually beginning to run short.

A belated recognition of the invaluable services to French prestige and influence abroad that has been, and is still, rendered by these teaching orders has induced the Government to bring forward a number of bills for their partial reinstatement. In January a bill was introduced by M. Poincaré's Government, with his chief colleagues in the Cabinet as its sponsors, as well as the former Radical Socialist, M. Millerand, who indorses it in his capacity as President of the Republic—to enable the Christian Brothers to found novitiates in France for the supply of recruits to their schools abroad. The bill expressly explains that it involves no thought of allowing the Christian Brothers to reopen their former schools in France. It aims only at authorizing the foundation in France of a new Order, under the title of "Missionary Institute of the Christian Brothers' Schools," whose purpose shall be to work only in the French colonies and protectorates abroad. In France they are to be expressly restricted to such establishments as may be necessary to maintain and develop their missions outside of France. It is proposed that they shall be permitted in sixteen towns, and the municipal authorities have been consulted in each case. Three of those

municipalities have actually declared themselves hostile to their admission, but the Government considers that Parliament should decide whether or not these local objections are to be overruled. This attempt to override the opposition of local politicians in three important towns is to the credit of the Government. But certainly their proposals cannot be regarded as generous. Even this niggardly concession is justified by recalling a clause in the Decree of 1903, which disbanded them, in which a stipulation was inserted that their claims might be reconsidered under the conditions that have now arisen.

It seems amazing that such great pains should be necessary even to allow French missionaries to develop their educational activities abroad, which every government has admitted to be of priceless service to France. The bill was sponsored not only by MM. Poincaré and Millerand but by M. Manoury, Minister for Home Affairs, M. de Lasteyrie, the Minister for Finance, M. Bérard, the Education Minister, and M. Sarraut, Minister for the Colonies. In the preamble to it, they point out that "the Christian Brothers had 515 schools outside of France in 1900; they have 774 schools to-day, in which 8,130 masters give a French education to 193,337 pupils with a devotion and a success which the Government of the Republic acknowledges gratefully. But owing to the inadequacy in numbers of his staff the Superior General is obliged to keep on active duty men of seventy-nine to seventy-five years of age; he has to refuse pupils by hundreds, and even to suppress a large number of classes—as for instance in the important and flourishing college of Kadi-Keni, which has 1,100 pupils of various religions, of whom scarcely ten per cent are Catholics. The Treaty of Versailles, by its 438th article,

which banishes the German missionaries from certain territories, places upon the Allied or Associated Powers the obligation to safeguard the interests of these missions, in other words to give them the means of recruiting a new personnel.

"So it is that on all sides, in the United States, in Italy, in Spain, in Switzerland, in Ireland, as well as in Germany, a large number of local novitiates have been established and it is their recruits who will reap the harvest that has been sown so lavishly for centuries by French missionaries, unless France takes the steps necessary to secure the upkeep of her own missions. The Christian Brothers especially find themselves nowadays under the necessity either of jeopardizing their work the glory and the benefits of which are the admiration of all the nations, or else of appealing to foreigners and, in so doing, denationalizing their order and their schools."

Among the tributes to the work which this particularly successful teaching order of the Christian Brothers has called forth, perhaps the most remarkable is a letter from that veteran and impenitent persecutor of the Church, M. Ferdinand Buisson, deputy for Paris and President of the League for the Rights of Man. In an appendix to the recently published "Life" of one of their most gifted pioneers, Brother Justinius, there is printed among a mass of other tributes from eminent public men and men of letters the following letter from M. Buisson: "On my return to Paris," he writes, "I have just received the notification of Brother Justinius's death. Had I been in town I would certainly have attended his funeral. Only a few weeks ago Brother Justinius wrote me a letter which touched me very deeply, for I found in it once again that intensely moving note of Christian charity combined with an absolute sincerity

of religious conviction. I would not wish that this good man, from whom I was divided by so many differences of opinion, should depart this life without my paying to his memory the tribute of the regard which for thirty years I have constantly felt for the nobility of his character, the dignity of his life, and the moral elevation of which he gave so much evidence."

Yet even with the support of all the leading figures in the Cabinet and with such confirmation as is offered by tributes like those of M. Ferdinand Buisson, the Government dares not to go beyond invoking the provision contained within the Law of 1904 to claim, on behalf of these incredibly faithful propagandists of French civilization among foreign peoples, the right to recruit for their foreign missions in France itself. And in a day of very small mercies the French Catholics are glad to get even so little. The Government has indeed developed this first step by introducing other similar bills for the recruitment of other missionary congregations—but always with the same ignominious caution, in dread of arousing old controversies that might sweep the Conservatives out of office and bring back a Liberal Government which would inevitably be anticlerical. So in each of the bills for the benefit of these Missionary Congregations, the number of their houses and the places in which they may be formed are strictly defined. Thus, the Society of Franciscan Missionaries is to have permission (always assuming that the bill is not successfully held up by the Senate, with its pre-war anticlerical traditions) to form twelve new establishments in France, with a maximum of 180 members in all—unless the Council of State allows this number to be increased. Similarly, the Society of Missionaries of the Levant is to be allowed twenty new houses, with 290 members

in all. The Society of African Missionaries at Lyons is to have twelve new houses with seventy-one members, and the Congregation of the White Fathers is to have twenty-seven new houses—most of them in Africa—with 159 members.

It is something gained at least that the French Government should have undertaken to secure the legislation necessary to enable these missionary societies to found new centers for recruiting their missions and their schools. It will be a solid gain—however contemptibly ungrateful the French Government may appear for having refused to go further in restoring the liberties of the religious orders—to the Catholic revival in France. But it is the deplorable truth that even these concessions are not sure of passing through both Houses of Parliament, and that if the present Parliament falls in hopeless discredit through its inability to restore France to financial stability, then not only these modest proposals but every other measure that has been taken, since the war ended, for the reinstatement of the Church in France may be swept away in an avalanche of Liberal reaction.

Foremost among the protagonists of the teaching orders after their expulsion from France was the late Baron Denys Cochin, deputy for Paris and member of the French Academy, who through the years that followed the rupture of diplomatic relations with the Vatican was generally spoken of as the "lay Nuncio" in Paris. His personal experience of what expulsion of the old teaching orders meant to hundreds of thousands of French Catholic families found expression in many impassioned articles in the closing years of his life. "My two sons," he wrote in a characteristic article in the *Figaro*, "were educated by the Marists at the Collége Stanislas; the elder of them had already made a name

for himself as a writer, and the School of Mapmaking was proud of him: the second of them was an excellent captain who had just left St. Cyr. Both were killed in the war. And now my grandson will never be able to go to the Marists at Stanislas, who formed the character of his uncles and of so many others—of Guynemer for instance; for they have been proscribed, dispersed, expelled from France, to be regarded with toleration only in Tokyo, according to the promises of our Ambassador M. Jonnart. The street down which Guynemer used to run to school as a boy now bears the name of the schoolboy whom they taught; but they themselves have been driven out of their colleges to which the Rue Guynemer leads. So now the Guynemer family and the Cochin family are no longer in a position to urge on their behalf: 'We were well satisfied with these masters and there is no cause for complaint against them; leave them alone.' But instead, under Article II, if a family unites in daring to complain of the scandal of having to send its children to be taught by a master who has never heard of Darwin, they will be told that Article II forbids all such complaints. The indignant father will have to hold his tongue and the judge will refuse to hear any complaint. . . ."

Yet it is the common jargon of French politics that these laws concerning the banishment of the teaching orders are "unalterable," and that in no conceivable circumstances may the question of recalling them be reconsidered. "These fantastic laws," as Denys Cochin called them, "at a time when schoolmasters cannot be found; these ungrateful laws when the teaching orders and their pupils gave their lives in hundreds of thousands; these laws that were passed as an insult and a challenge to so many families which chose these exiled

priests as their masters and who have now to watch the continuance of their banishment while they themselves mourn the loss of their sons who died for France." And in another article he comments upon the polite astonishment of a brilliant French officer who on a recent visit to the monastic colony of Mount Athos was asked by a pious Greek monk whether many of the priests in France could read and write. What would the good monk have thought, asks Denys Cochin, if he had been told that while many of them were very learned men it was counted a crime for them to teach in France, especially if they happened to be members of the teaching orders? M. Jonnart, the French Ambassador to the Vatican, had just made a speech in which, while emphasizing the excellent results that had been gained for France by the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Pope, he issued a solemn warning to the religious orders that they must not base upon these happy results any hopes of being allowed to return and teach in their own country.

"It is being said," wrote Denys Cochin, "that some of the religious orders are coming back to France. Was it so fine an achievement, after all, to have driven them out? The State was free to remain absolutely undenominational in its own teaching institutions; but was there any sort of reason for prohibiting teaching by members of religious orders as though it were something dangerous and criminal? Here we find members of religious orders—Brothers of the Christian schools or Sisters of Charity—for whom the State has expressly authorized the privilege of living and possessing property in communities. Yet they are still to be deprived of the right, possessed by any other French men or women who have the proper university degrees, to teach in a free school. Nothing, it would seem—not even the

blood that the members of the religious orders shed for France in the war—can redeem them from the taint of belonging to religious communities.

"A thousand young Jesuit fathers, who flocked from all parts of the world to serve France, were killed in the war. The others are now coming quietly back, not to live in ostentatious establishments or even to live in communities; and they are hoping that they may be able to resume their proper vocation of teaching. They had such splendid records of patriotic service in the war that it might be thought that those who devote themselves to the inquisition against this new crime of teaching might be expected to pursue their investigations less rigorously against them. But no: they are to be left under no illusions. The ideas of M. Combes, in spite of M. Tardieu's bold repudiation of them the other day, still rule. They are not to be allowed to teach, and their university degrees count for nothing in their case—for no more than does the blood that they shed for their country. It is M. Jonnart himself, our Ambassador to the Pope, who rushes out from the Vatican to the French frontiers to ask them to go back from where they have come . . . The Jesuits have witnessed many strange things in their long history, and they have the reputation of being difficult to astonish. But such a greeting as this must amaze even them!"

Whenever the Government attempt to deal with any of these deep grievances of the French Catholics, which can obviously be remedied only by a repeal of the anti-clerical legislation, they are immediately accused of violating the conditions upon which the *Union Sacrée* was based. But such charges are the necessary corollaries of every Coalition, and a strong Government must be prepared to meet them fearlessly. So in the meantime

the Catholics are redoubling their pressure, not by direct demands for repeal of anticlerical laws, but by concentrating upon such questions of obvious injustice and false policy as this treatment of the religious orders. An excellent example of the hard hitting that is being done by the Catholic leaders on this question is provided by the letter addressed last autumn by Cardinal Charost, the Archbishop of Rennes, to the Superior of the Franciscans in his diocese after the refusal by the local authorities to allow the order to resume its former activities in the town:

"This blind decree of banishment which is inflicted on you," wrote the Cardinal, "and which seems to be in no way modified either by the example of your own heroism in the war or by the bitter disillusionments which have succeeded it, leaves me stricken with a great grief and deep sense of humiliation. A great grief, inasmuch as I was myself the bishop and the hostage of a great town during the occupation by the Germans. I was obliged in that time to study at close quarters the designs of the enemy. Before the war, in whatever countries possessed natural riches which he coveted or whose opinion he was anxious to convert, he was no more sparing in his efforts to counteract the peaceful penetration of our religious orders and of their missions than in trying to forestall what he believed to be the intentions of our military leaders. During the war he constantly exploited the lamentable reputation of France as an infidel and materialistic country which we had obtained through so many laws of spoliation and so many decrees dissolving the religious communities. It is therefore no mere apprehension on my part but a matter of certain knowledge that he will be no less prompt in exploiting and publishing broadcast, with a perverse sat-

isfaction, the decision that has now been made against you.

"The decision is for me also a bitter humiliation. For the name of the town of Rennes will be attached to this vote against you. It will give an impression of our city that is none the less pernicious because it is ill-founded. Its ancient parliamentary liberalism, the traditions of moderation and of dignity among its citizens, their deep and secure attachment, however little ostentatious and demonstrative it may be, to the faith of their fathers, their reserved but acutely sensitive good feeling, should all alike have protected Rennes from any such measure as this. Without the smallest pretext and without any attempt at alleviation, it affronts every instinct that is associated with delicacy and honor. I still hope that these considerations may yet be given their due weight on reflection, and that the local and public authorities will come together in their solicitude—which must be grave enough at the present time!—for the common good and for our moral reputation, which itself is also one of the assets of the country."

CHAPTER V

IS THE CATHOLIC MOVEMENT POLITICAL?

That the Church has enormously strengthened its position in France over the one held by it before the war is admitted on all sides. Anticlericals in France will tell you bitterly that the Jesuits are now in power everywhere; but those who are not obsessed by the mania of seeing Jesuits on every backstair will say that the reactionaries, and especially the royalists, have been unscrupulously exploiting the passing sentimental wave of reaction towards religion, for the benefit of their political schemes. On the other hand, foreign critics frequently declare that the French Catholics have been making various undesirable alliances with disreputable or untrustworthy politicians in order to further their own programs. From either point of view, the continuance of the undoubted increase of the Church's influence in France would appear to be precarious.

It is indeed impossible to form any clear idea of how secure the recent consolidation of Catholic influence is in fact. In France the material security of the Church is obviously a matter of politics; and no one, however experienced, and least of all a foreign observer, can hope to predict with any certainty even the probabilities of the various political elections that are to be held in 1924. Obviously the success or failure of the French occupation of the Ruhr will have a profound effect upon the future of the politicians who have been committed

to that policy, and who have since the war, shown themselves more or less friendly to the Church. If M. Poincaré and his colleagues fail badly in the Ruhr, there is no doubt at all that his adversaries will gain very largely at the next elections; and there is scarcely any doubt that they will be even more anticlerical in a few years' time than they are now. So far as party politics are concerned, their return to power, or even their reinforcement in large numbers in both the *Chambre des Députés* and the Senate, might easily put an end to the renewed diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican. That the *Bloc des Gauches* is still resolutely opposed to the policy of reconciliation with the Vatican was shown quite clearly in June last, when the *Chambre des Députés* was compelled by the Radicals to discuss the whole question on its merits once more. They challenged a debate on the Pope's letter, issued on the anniversary of his nomination to the Papacy, in which he appealed to the French Government to try to find some other means than military occupation for settling her quarrel with Germany over the question of reparations. The actual figures of the division at the conclusion of the debate are of small account. What is significant is that the Radicals made the Pope's letter the pretext for a general attack upon the policy of having an Ambassador at the Vatican, and that all the parties of the Left joined without hesitation in voting in favor of a cessation of diplomatic relations.

Equally noteworthy on the other hand was the attitude of M. Poincaré, who still remains a strong supporter of the traditional policies of the Republic, and who dealt with the Pope's intervention as a question that did actually involve the whole policy of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. M. Poincaré deplored the Pope's letter on

political grounds, but did not regard it as a hostile act. On the contrary, he was able to point to the immediate success of his own representations to the Pope through M. Jonnart, which were followed at once by a communication addressed by the Pope to the Papal Nuncio in Germany, who conveyed to the German hierarchy the opinion that passive resistance in the Ruhr by Germany ought to be discontinued. The result of the incident was consequently a fresh proof of the value to France of having a direct channel of approach to the Vatican. Noteworthy, too, was the attitude of the French Catholics, including some of the most determined supporters of the Ruhr occupation. They treated the Pope's intervention with profound respect, but turned it to their own advantage by pointing out that the Pope insisted upon the moral obligation of Germany to pay reparations to France up to the limit of her capacity to pay.

But these political controversies are so transitory, and at best reveal only such undependable forces, that they can throw little light upon the real strength or weakness of the Catholic movement since the war. It is, however, possible to analyze the real character of the Conservative parties that have given the most important assistance to the Church in recent years, and to see whether or not they are likely to continue that support in altered circumstances. Also it is worth while examining to what extent the Church has been able to consolidate its position independently of all possible political restrictions and alliances. The most usual criticisms of the relations between the Church and its political supporters are directed especially against the royalists of the *Action Française.* The encouragement that is widely given to the young royalist movement by many French Catholics is criticized on two grounds. In the first place it is urged that the

leading figures in the *Action Française* agitation are either declared agnostics like M. Charles Maurras, who support the Church on purely utilitarian grounds of public policy and social discipline, or else professing Catholics like M. Daudet whose career and whose writings are regarded as being far from edifying. The complaint against the *Action Française* is that, while it appeals very strongly to young Frenchmen on patriotic grounds, it means in practice that they become enthusiastic disciples of two publicists, one of whom is an agnostic possessed of dialectic powers such as have scarcely been known in France since the days of Jean Jacques Rousseau; and the other is at best a master of objectionable vituperation, and at worst the extremely popular author of pornographic novels.

Both of these objections deserve brief attention. So far as the agnosticism of M. Maurras and some of his associates is concerned, it must be admitted that he is usually most scrupulous in avoiding any sort of agnostic propaganda in his political writings. He is, on the other hand, devoted heart and soul to his own program—for he is the real author of the modern royalist movement in France—of bringing back France to her old hereditary allegiance to the Kings and to the Church. I cannot enter here into the fascinating and extremely powerful reasoning of M. Maurras as the philosopher of reaction against democracy. There has probably been no system of political philosophy in France comparable to it since Rousseau wrote his *Contrat Social,* and the influence of M. Maurras on modern French thought and literature have been incalculable. M. Maurras does not believe in Christianity as a creed, but he does believe in the social necessity of an established Church, and in all his writings he insists upon the need of restoring the

Church to its old position as the principal support of the hereditary monarchy. With his extraordinary didactic powers of political exposition, he has probably convinced as many young men of the social value of the Church as a national institution as he has convinced others of the salutary influence of hereditary kingship in France. More than that, he has been one of the most effective critics in all the French press of the disastrous policy pursued by Emile Combes and the anticlericals in proscribing the religious orders and in so dividing Frenchmen from one another with the bitterest resentments. Considering all the assistance that M. Maurras has given to the Church in this way by his unfailing support and his deadly attacks upon the old Radical policies, it is not surprising that most French Catholics regard him as an ally whose aid is to be accepted with gratitude and enthusiasm. Even the Jesuits have pronounced in favor of coöperation with him on all matters of Catholic policy when he is willing to lend his aid, and this whole question was discussed in all its bearings with remarkable lucidity in a large book about M. Maurras and his policies, which the Père Descoqs, S.J., published before the war.

M. Léon Daudet, however, is in a different and much more equivocal position. Unlike M. Maurras, he proclaims himself not only a practising Catholic, but a convert to the Church. His first marriage, with Victor Hugo's daughter, has constantly been charged against him as evidence of his insincerity, since there was no religious ceremony for it, although he was then conspicuously identified with the Catholic reaction. But it is not his private life but his public record that arouses criticism. Making every allowance for the difference of French and English habits of speech and writing, it is

impossible not to regard M. Daudet's daily journalism in the *Action Française* newspaper as unpardonably indecent. He never misses an opportunity of parading some obscene metaphor or of introducing some disreputable anecdote about the public men whom he wishes either to criticize or to praise. And apart from the coarseness of his writing, his methods of controversy are invariably violent beyond the limits of the barest Christian charity. He gave a lamentable exhibition of these controversial methods in the early part of this year in a series of gross personal attacks upon the Abbé Trochu, director of the Catholic daily newspaper, the *Ouest Eclair*. It is true that he had been greatly provoked, for the Abbé Trochu had published a series of articles denouncing his more recent novels as blatant pornography. M. Daudet and his colleagues immediately replied by pointing out that M. Daudet had made public a letter some time previously in which he had replied to the representations made to him by Cardinal Dubois about his last novel, by announcing that he had forbidden the publication of any future editions of it and had torn up his contract with the publishers. This letter of M. Daudet's had attracted considerable attention at the time it was made public, but the Abbé Trochu disclosed the fact that it was not written until seven months after the Cardinal's official weekly periodical had protested in the strongest terms about the book, and the novel had earned enormous royalties for M. Daudet in the meantime; and moreover, that the publishers had announced and put on sale a "final" large edition of the book, within the week before M. Daudet wrote his edifying letter of submission to the Cardinal's representations. Such revelations as these do not inspire confidence in M. Daudet as a Catholic layman; but his con-

troversy with the Abbé Trochu (who, it must be admitted, laid himself open to such a controversy in attacking M. Daudet) showed him in a still less edifying light. He at once replied by accusing the Abbé Trochu of making a fortune out of the sale of indecent postcards, his sole justification for so doing being the fact that the manager of the *Ouest Eclair* had some years ago bought up, and sold again soon afterwards, a stock of popular local postcards, some of which might conceivably have given offence. But even this accusation, directed by a man who professes to be a champion of the Church in France against a priest whose reputation is above reproach and who has done prodigious service for the Church, was mild in comparison with the insinuations against the character of the Abbé Trochu's enterprises that were repeatedly made by the editor of the *Action Française*.

So much for the objections on personal grounds to the leaders of the royalist movement. But the much larger question has to be considered, whether the position of the Church has not been seriously compromised by many Catholics, both priests and laymen, who have persisted in denouncing the Republic as essentially antichristian, and in identifying the Church, as far as was possible to them, with the agitation to overthrow the Republic and to bring back the monarchy. There is no doubt that for several generations this suspicion that the Church was disloyal to the Republic has hung like a millstone around the necks of the Catholics of France. The patriotism of the Catholics in the Great War, and especially the wonderful valor of the priests in action, whether as army chaplains or as soldiers in the ranks, has gone far to vindicate the Church in the eyes of the mass of people in France who are not practising Catholics. When the war ended it seemed that, in the new world

that had arisen out of it, the old prejudices on both sides could be forgotten; that the Church in France had decided to forget the past and to coöperate without any sort of mental reservation with the Republic for the general welfare of the country. On the other side it seemed that the Government would recognize the generosity and forgiveness of the soldier priests and of all the devout Catholics who had been forced to endure fresh insults and injuries from one Government after another.

It was this very sense of a new world being born that in some ways gave the royalist movement its chance, and that made young men ready to consider any constructive political program without regard to traditional antagonisms. And such support as the royalist movement has obtained from the young Catholics of France, has been probably as much among the sons of convinced republicans as among the old nobility. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of this royalist agitation, in so far as it is a genuine program of restoring the monarchy. Many of its supporters will admit frankly that they do not believe that the monarchical restoration is meant seriously even by the leaders of the movement. But the influence of this royalist group is quite extraordinary in proportion to their numbers in the country. They have been the driving force behind the occupation of the Ruhr, just as they were the driving force behind the impeachment of Caillaux and Malvy under M. Clemenceau's war ministry. They have many friends in high places, and they include an astonishing number of brilliantly gifted and determinedly vigorous public men. And not least important is their organization of young men, under the title of the *Camelots du Roi,* who believe in and practise the methods of political direct action that have brought the Fascisti into power in Italy.

Above all, they have been the most active organizers of French nationalism, and all over the country patriotic young men, and many patriotic priests among them, have given their support to organizations inspired and directed by the *Action Française.* In itself this association of so many Catholics with demonstrations organized under royalist auspices, or with an appearance of royalist inspiration, means little enough. But if a political reaction towards the Left comes at the next elections, or at any time in the near future, the royalist movement has attracted so much Catholic support—it has in fact become a considerable political force mainly through this Catholic support—that there is a very real danger that the Church will once again be identified in the popular imagination with the politics of the extreme Right. The retribution for that association with the extreme Right may indeed be very vindictive if the Radicals ever have a chance of accomplishing it.

An instance of how much support the *Action Française* has obtained, at any rate for its more popular demonstrations, was given at the Jeanne d'Arc festival last year. MM. Daudet and Maurras are consummate masters of the stage management of a popular agitation; and they have exploited the Jeanne d'Arc festival to the utmost. The official procession in which the President of the Republic lays his wreath at the feet of the Jeanne d'Arc statue takes place early in the morning and scarcely attracts attention. But the traditional procession organized by the *Action Française,* which these royalists were the first to revive, in the days when they went to prison for organizing it, and which has become increasingly popular year by year since, is nowadays one of the greatest popular demonstrations in Paris. Most people in the surging crowds that throng the route for several miles wait

eagerly for the main contingent of the *Action Française* to arrive headed by its royalist banners; but one has to wait several hours while the other contingents file past. Most of them are definitely Catholic Associations of one kind or another, as is only fitting for the religious festival of Jeanne d'Arc. At the last demonstrations, for instance, most of the contingents, apart from the *Action Française,* came from the Young Men's Catholic Association. But besides them, there marched at the head of the Catholic Associations, the *Scouts de France;* behind them the *Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France*; then the *Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française* itself; then the *Cercles Catholiques d'Ouvriers;* then the *Unions Fédérales Professionelles;* the *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens;* then the *Unions Catholiques Professionelles;* then the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises;* then the *Unions Paroissiales;* then the *Noëllistes;* then a number of provincial associations. The Catholic movement was certainly well represented in this vast procession which passed along the streets, through which cries of "Vive Daudet" or "Vive le Roi" were raised time after time. Probably only a small proportion of them all had any royalist sympathies; but their association with the royalists was sufficiently proved to make the Recording Angel of the *Bloc des Gauches* take ample notes of it against the day of retribution, if it comes.

But what do all these public demonstrations really signify in effective influence in France? Was it more significant that all these Catholic associations rallied for a festival organized by the *Action Française;* or that Cardinal Dubois in his scarlet robes sat on a throne outside the Church of St. Augustin and watched the procession pass? Was it M. Daudet or the Cardinal who

really counted most? It is easy to decry all this manifestation of Catholic solidarity, and to say that the Catholics of France have simply allowed themselves to be exploited by the royalist politicians. It is easy even to explain away the genuine impression of M. Charles Maurras that the Catholic revival has swept France since the war, and that the Jeanne d'Arc festival—with its flags in every back street and its throngs of processionists along all the main thoroughfares of the city—symbolizes the return of France to the Church. But why should such an obviously important demonstration be explained away? The facts speak for themselves. The great majority of these Catholic organizations have no connection whatever with the royalist movement, but they have an unquestionable connection with Cardinal Dubois as Archbishop of Paris. And there is probably much more truth in the contrary interpretation of the Jeanne d'Arc procession by the Radical press, which regards it as a scandalous demonstration of how the Church is able to consolidate its forces even when it is proscribed by the laws of the country.

As a survey of the immense Catholic organization that has been built up within recent years in France, I know no account more illuminating than that given in an elaborate compilation entitled *Le Péril Jésuite* by M. Maurice Charny, one of the most painstaking and capable of anti-clerical investigators. M. Charny is a typical Jesuit hunter, and his determination to regard every one associated with Catholic organizations in France as a Jesuit in disguise becomes at times almost grotesque. But he has devoted much industry to his compilation of what he describes as Jesuit activities, and it is interesting to follow out their many ramifications. Even M. Charny will admit that the Jesuits have no control, however indirect, over

certain Catholic organizations, and he consequently leaves out many of the most vigorous and important of Catholic activities such as the *Maison de la Bonne Presse,* with its newspapers and its cinema-shows, or the Vincent de Paul Society, with its Conferences in every town of France and in most of the important colleges. But such as it is, the network of organizations that M. Charny attributes to the Jesuits is impressive enough; and it gives some idea of how vigorously the Catholic movement is being conducted. M. Charny divides the activities to which he wishes to draw attention into three categories: the works of organization and of general propaganda; the works of recruitment for Catholic action; and the professional and "social" organizations.

In the first category M. Charny deals first with the Catholic Committee of Religious Defence, which has its headquarters in the Rue d'Assas in Paris, and is more or less an arsenal of information for all Catholic activities—offering advice as to the best means of forming new associations, recording the successes or failures or progress of existing activities, and supplying every sort of information useful for their development and extension. It comprises a general secretariat, a legal advisory committee, an editorial department, and a service of public lectures. It publishes leaflets and pamphlets on topical questions and issues a weekly bulletin that is supplied gratis to 500 newspapers. Before the war it had a staff of about forty lecturers, drawn from the disbanded religious orders or from militant Catholic laymen, and since the end of the war they have returned to their labors with renewed energy. Besides these principal activities it has organized a series of special associations for various purposes, such as the Sunday Observance Society, the Jeanne d'Arc Society, and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Society. It receives and collects

donations for the benefit of the exiled religious orders and for victims of the religious persecution—such as the many families of Catholic officers who have been impoverished through resigning to avoid taking part in the active proceedings against the churches after the Law of Separation. "In short," as M. Charny puts it, the Committee "serves as a sort of general staff whose labors are directed by the Jesuits."

In the same building in the Rue d'Assas (which is just beside Mgr. Baudrillart's Catholic University of Paris) there is another Catholic Defense Committee, entitled the General Education and Teaching Society, which was founded in 1868 to counteract the propaganda of the anti-clerical Teaching League. It has a complete organization for the support and defence of all the Catholic educational establishments—primary or secondary or for advanced studies; and its special business is to supervise the preparation of books used in the schools, to warn the teachers against undesirable authors or books, to be vigilantly on guard against all encroachments upon the rights of the Catholic schools or against the activities of anti-Catholic teachers; to give every legal assistance to the Catholic schools and especially to the religious orders in trying to circumvent the laws which are directed against them; and also to collect funds by every possible means for the support of Catholic education.

Working on parallel lines there is the *Action Populaire,* which was founded in 1902 at Reims as a sort of Labor Research Department to provide information and expert lectures on all questions of interest to the Catholic Social movement. It publishes six periodicals and a huge number of pamphlets, of which 1,200,000 are distributed every year—as well as posters, almanacs, and miscellaneous publications. "Let us admit frankly," says M.

Charny, "that the modest publications of the *Ligue de la République* make a very poor show beside this prodigious output." The *Action Populaire* has moreover constituted its publication department into a publishing house with a capital of one million francs. In addition to this mass of documental literature, the *Action Populaire* offers advice and interviews on any conceivable subject. Its prospectus declares that "these lectures, classes and visits, which are solicited from all sides and which almost overwhelm our resources, are addressed to every class: to employers, farmers, workingmen, laborers, shop-girls, young men from the *Lycées* and colleges, trade union leaders of both sexes, the audiences at the *Semaines Sociales* and Congresses, young ladies, pupils of the seminaries, and the clergy." The *Action Populaire* had to be closed down during the war. After the Armistice it was reorganized, in Paris, and it now is located at Vannes, outside Paris, where its library is open to all students of social questions and its experts are available for interviews at any time. Its work is, furthermore, carried out all over the country by about twenty auxiliary secretariats which act in organizing centers of information for wide areas of France. Its efforts are also seconded by the *Ecole Normale Sociale,* founded in 1912, for women interested in social work; which encourages the formation of women's trade unions, and which has given rise to a new and still more ambitious organization called the Women's Association for Social Study and Action.

While these various societies exist to provide the Catholic movement with information, the most important of all the Catholic organizations is the *Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française,* which also has its headquarters in the Rue d'Assas. Before the war it had some 4,000 groups, 55 diocesan associations, 36 local federa-

tions, 11 provincial federations, and 4 in the colonies, with a total membership of 150,000. Its work was inevitably broken up by the war, but has been resumed since with marvelous activity all over France. It already counted 3,000 groups by the beginning of 1921, with a membership of 120,000, while the number of its periodical publications had risen from 47 to 58. Its activities are without number, and it is continually gathering momentum. Last April alone for instance, besides its national congress, it held at least 17 other congresses, in addition to its constant series of lectures, study circles, committee meetings, retreats, and innumerable other activities. What the A.C.J.F. is for the Catholic laymen the *Ligue Patriotique des Françaises* is for the Catholic women. It also fell into abeyance during the war but it has already got back approximately to its pre-war membership of 350,000, distributed through 24 dioceses, and with a complete organization on the same lines as the N.C.J.F., which serves constantly as its model, and the two organizations were naturally recruited largely from the same families.

These are, of course, the principal organizations of the Catholic movement in France. But apart from their own activities, there is, as M. Charny points out with real concern, a constant intensive effort to obtain new recruits both for them and for other Catholic works. There are, for instance, in almost every parish what are known as the patronages, or boys' and girls' clubs, which are usually run in connection with the local Catholic schools. But they have also been organized still further into a more or less militant force, mainly under the auspices of two vast associations, the *Scouts de France,* which are much like the English Boy Scouts, and the still larger Gymnastic and Sports Federation of the Patronages of France—

popularly known as the F.G.S.P.F. This membership is certainly not less than 200,000, and it is constantly organizing congresses and festivals of its own, besides taking part with its bands and other spectacular effects, in all the local popular demonstrations. The *Scouts de France,* however, are probably the more promising organization of the two. They were founded after the war, in 1920, to counteract the anti-Catholic tendencies of the previously existing Boy Scout organizations, which were becoming extremely popular but which were naturally under the influence of the English organizations and shared the Broad Church principles of the Y. M. C. A. The first president of the Catholic Scouts was General de Maud'huy, one of the heroes of the war, who like Foch and Castelnau and Lyautey and so many more was a very fervent Catholic. One of the higher grades in their semi-military organization is to become an "Homme d'Œuvres" or social worker, which involves membership of a social study class, and passing an examination in social work. The influence of these Scouting Societies, with their annual camps and their attractive uniforms, and constant participation in the affairs of the local churches, can scarcely be exaggerated.

Besides this intensive organization of the boys and girls from an early age, it is necessary to note the corresponding work of organization among the young men and women who have left school for the universities or technical colleges. With the social work of the Catholic trade unions, both industrial and agricultural, which deserves special attention, I deal separately in the following chapter. But apart from these distinct groupings of Catholic workers in their own occupations for purposes of social and economic defence, the young men and women who are completing their training for their future careers are

made the special object of Catholic propaganda. Thus, in the Engineering and Scientific Colleges, the Central School of Arts and Manufactures, the Legal and Medical Faculties of the State Universities, priests are constantly engaged in finding recruits for their study clubs, for the Vincent de Paul Society, and for every sort of layman's work. At the Mining Institute, for instance, a priest succeeded in obtaining 150 recruits in one day at a ceremony he organized for them in the Church of St. Sulpice in March, 1921. Two years later their number had doubled. The Social Union of Catholic Engineers has its own permanent headquarters, with an employment agency, an inquiry office, and its own periodical. Two-thirds of its members are pupils, past or present, of the *Ecole Polytechnique*. The *Ecole Polytechnique* has naturally received particular attention, and a separate organization has been founded for them by one of the Jesuit war-chaplains who was formerly an important capitalist, the Père Pupey-Girard. At the series of conferences that are held specially for them there are now some 2,000 pupils of the *Ecole Polytechnique* more or less continually in attendance. Similarly there has been a determined effort to evangelize the military and naval colleges. At least four of the ten present Marshals of France—Foch, Fayolle, Franchet d'Espérey, and Lyautey—are former pupils of the Jesuit colleges and have remained their faithful friends. They have naturally shown favor to the attempts to introduce Catholic influences into the military academies and at St. Cyr Catholic influences flourish among the young men training to be officers in the French Army. As for the universities, even in the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* there are at least fifty zealous Catholic propagandists. The Sorbonne is full of Catholic associations and lecturers, which the prevalent anticlerical atmosphere is

unable to prevent, even though the Catholics are gradually gaining ground through every field.

Everywhere the organizers of the Catholic movement are thus concentrating, at the top upon the natural leaders of public opinion, and below upon the formation of character in the schools. And they have succeeded so far, operating through the influence of the *élites* in every direction—through the Catholic generals in the army, through the Catholic members of the French Academy, through the Catholic scientists in the colleges and scientific institutes—that they have gradually undermined the old anticlerical system that was created to drive religious life out of the country. The Catholics have won their way through to positions of such influence in every field of social life, their individual efforts have been powerfully organized and coördinated, and they are well represented already in every part of the political administrative machine which was designed to crush them. Whatever the results of the next elections, or of future elections, may be, the Catholic opposition to anticlerical legislation is now so firmly consolidated that its enactment would be extremely arduous, and its administration in practice would be still more difficult. They are continually exerting their combined pressure all along the line for the repeal, or the gradual repudiation, of the various anticlerical laws. But even while those laws remain on the statute book, they are shown to be powerless to prevent the Catholics from securing their own interests in spite of the laws, and even from extending their influence from day to day. M. Charny, as an embittered anticlerical, shows how large a part the Jesuits have unquestionably played in organizing the Catholic movement, notwithstanding the fact that they are expressly forbidden to exercise corporate influence in France or to live in any

community. Professor Bureau, himself one of the leaders of the Catholic revival, shows how the Law of Separation has defeated its own object through sheer excess of zeal on the part of the anticlericals, by actually guaranteeing the authority of the bishops in France within their own jurisdiction.

These are the questions that really concern the leaders of the Catholic revival, and to identify them with the royalist reactionaries is obviously a grotesque exaggeration. There will undoubtedly be more fierce conflicts, before the relations of Church and State have been settled in France, for matters obviously cannot remain as they are. The conflicts of the immediate future will undoubtedly rage once more over the question of education, in which the Catholics are still fighting desperately hard for their elementary rights, of which they have been deprived. Napoleon insisted upon taking the whole educational system of the country into his own hands, and it was not till after long years of protracted struggle that the Catholics won the fight, first to establish their own primary schools, then their own secondary schools, and finally their own universities. With the work of the Catholic universities I can deal only very briefly here. They were founded, like all the educational establishments in France, with the object of providing centers of teaching in which Catholic doctrine could be expounded, and anti-Catholic doctrines could be challenged. Within a few months after the law was altered so as to enable Catholics to found their own separate universities, Cardinal Richard in Paris convened an assembly of the French bishops and with them launched an appeal for funds to establish a Catholic University in the old Carmelite monastery close to the Palais du Luxembourg. Mgr. d'Hulst was appointed its first rector, and although it was soon after-

wards forbidden to use the title of university and was not allowed to confer any academic degrees, its work has progressed magnificently, first under Mgr. d'Hulst, and since his death under his chief disciple Mgr. Baudrillart.

Other Catholic universities were founded very soon afterwards in cities chosen with a view to covering each main region of France—at Lille, Lyons, Strasbourg, Toulouse, and Angers. Each of these universities has become a focus of Catholic activity and a training center for young Catholic workers, both priests and laymen, in its own part of the country. But the Catholic university of Paris naturally remains the most important of them all, and its staff includes many of the most brilliant scientists and most distinguished professors in every department of learning. Supported solely by voluntary subscriptions, living from hand to mouth year after year, and crippled by inadequate accommodation and lack of funds, it has yet exerted an enormous influence upon contemporary thought in France. Mgr. Baudrillart was fully justified in claiming not long ago that within the past thirty years it has succeeded in training a generation of young Frenchmen to realize the essential value of Catholic philosophy, and to learn for themselves that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and without prejudice is more incompatible with agnosticism than with the doctrine of the Church. Above all, it has helped to train a generation of social workers, of teachers, of writers and professional men, who have already forced their way to the top in each of their own spheres of action; and their influence has already succeeded in effectively destroying the ascendency of that agnostic and German-made philosophy with which Renan dominated two generations of Frenchmen.

But while the Catholic universities have thus made good their position so successfully that, even without the

government recognition, which they claim as their right, they can look forward confidently to maintaining and extending their influence, the position of the Catholic schools throughout France is much more precarious and even more scandalously unfair. All over France the Catholics who dislike the State schools and distrust their teachers, and who want to have their children given religious instruction as part of their daily lessons, are obliged to create and maintain schools of their own—whether primary or secondary—for which they receive no assistance whatever from the State. On the other hand they are obliged to pay taxes for the upkeep of the State schools which are of no use to them. In the more Catholic parts of the country State schools are to be found—by no means infrequently, in which the schoolmaster and schoolmistress have literally not one pupil. Their salaries are none the less paid to them regularly by the Government, and they are not bad salaries, as incomes go in France. The teachers of the Catholic schools, which are attended by all the children of the district and which are entirely supported by voluntary subscriptions paid to the clergy, receive salaries varying from 100 to 200 francs (or roughly 27 to 50 shillings) a month for desperately hard full-time work.

It is not surprising that the parents who have to maintain these Catholic schools if they want their children to receive any religious education, are deeply resentful of the system that forces them to pay taxes for the upkeep of schools in their own district which no children attend. They demand vainly, as the barest minimum of their civic rights, that they should receive the same consideration as is granted for instance to the Catholic schools in London, where, if the Catholics can show that a certain number of children are being educated at their

school, it receives the usual subsidy out of the rates. In Catholic Brittany the anomaly of these empty State schools being maintained at the expense of the ratepayers, while the crowded Catholic schools receive no grant whatever, is an outrage against every principle of popular government. The situation in Brittany is of course exceptional. Elsewhere in France the practising Catholics are usually in a decided minority: in some parts and particularly in the Center, they are a mere handful, unable to support schools of their own. In such places the clergy have to arrange as best they can to have the children taught their religious knowledge by voluntary teachers on Sundays and the weekly holidays. But wherever it is at all possible to do so, the Catholics have founded, and maintained from year to year out of their own pockets, what are known as the "free" schools. The contest in which they have had to engage is, judged by all human standards, utterly hopeless. Against the national organization, the unlimited financial resources, and the statutory privileges of the State schools they have been able to oppose only inadequate buildings, teachers who have accepted a life of starvation for the good of the cause, and the constant disadvantage of being excluded from legal recognition of their teaching. To find the financial resources to keep the free schools in existence, apart from the many other calls upon their capacity for raising money from their congregations, has been an appalling burden upon the clergy. In the old half moribund town of Saint-Servan, for instance, the clergy have to find 40,000 francs a year for the schools alone, from a total population of some 40,000 inhabitants of all ages, who are already overtaxed and find it hard enough to support the clergy without any question of supporting schools.

It is a magnificent testimony to the zeal and the self-sacrifice of the Catholic minority in France that they not only have founded and kept alive these Catholic schools but have also produced enough men and women willing to risk their health and to spend their youth in teaching in them for a starvation wage. And it is even more to their credit that one fifth of all the children attending primary schools in France are now on the books of these Catholic schools, while in secondary education, there are as many in the Catholic schools as in all the State secondary schools put together. Such is the actual state of affairs ten years after the teaching orders were banished from France. The schools and colleges in which formerly their gifts as teachers secured the attendance of scores of thousands of children from non-Catholic homes, have moreover either been obliged to close down altogether, or else kept alive by former pupils or priests who have become secularized so as to escape the ban upon their activities as members of teaching orders. When the ban fell upon the teaching orders, the whole organization of the Catholic schools had to be revised. Priests or laymen had to be found to take over the work that had previously been carried on by the congregations and financial responsibility for every school, whether primary or secondary, fell upon the bishop of each diocese. In some places the burden thus laid upon the bishops demands herculean effort. In the archdiocese of Rennes, which is the most important in Brittany, Cardinal Charost has to provide not only for a Catholic school in every parish, which is everywhere attended by the great majority of the children, but also for five secondary schools. Two of these, with some 500 boys in each, are situated in Rennes itself, and there are about 300 boys in each of the other three institutions, at Saint-Malo, Redon, and

Château Gironde. Most of these pupils come from the immediate neighborhood of the colleges, but many come in from a distance. At the college at Saint-Malo, for instance, nearly half are boarders.

These struggling but flourishing Catholic colleges are faced by the competition of the State secondary schools, of which the *Lycée* at Saint-Servan, with its immense modern buildings and its splendid equipment for scientific and other teaching, is a characteristic example. The teachers in these State schools are moreover fairly well paid, at least in comparison with the salaries which the Catholic colleges can pay. The State schools have also an immense advantage in that they are open free of charge to the sons of all French civil servants or soldiers or other persons in government employment, while the Catholic schools obviously can make no concession on their bedrock scale of fees. Yet the unendowed Catholic college at Saint-Malo has more than twice as many pupils as go to the government *Lycée* at Saint-Servan only a mile away.

The Saint-Malo college has an illustrious tradition in that it was founded, within a few years after the right to establish free secondary colleges was vindicated by the Catholic reformers in 1850, by the Abbé Jean Marie de Lamennais, less celebrated than his brilliant but unfortunate brother. The intellectual distinction of its founder, as well as the local importance of the Lamennais family, gave it a high reputation from its earliest days, and its standard of teaching has been well maintained. But, like all the Catholic secondary schools, it can grant no diplomas and can hold no public examinations. The State absolutely ignores their existence and only permits them to send up their pupils for the State examinations. Yet against an average of only two or

three boys who obtain their *baccalauréat* from among the pupils of the Saint-Servan *Lycée* every year, there are between twenty and thirty *bacheliers* from the Saint-Malo college. In discipline and for its finances, the college is directly responsible to the archbishop of the diocese, who of course appointed a priest specially to take charge of all educational questions. Financially, each college is supposed to be self-supporting, since it is run for boys whose parents can afford to give them a more expensive education than can be had in the primary schools, where education is necessarily given free of charge. In these secondary Catholic schools the pupils' fees are intended to cover the expenses of each college. The fees charged in fact vary, according to the age of the boy, from between the preposterously low levels of 1,200 and 1,600 francs each term for boarders (at present rates roughly $72.00 and $96.00), and between 250 and 500 francs a term for day boys. This standard scale for fees is for the moment increased by the temporary addition of ten per cent for day boys and five per cent for boarders, to meet the high cost of living. Small as they are, these fees are probably as much as most Catholic families in the country can afford to pay for their children's education, especially since they are obliged to pay taxes to keep up the State schools which are of no use to them. But this low level of fees inevitably means miserable wages for the priests who do all the teaching. In addition to having a room and being given their food at the college, the professors all receive the same stipend of 700 francs a year, the only exceptions being a few senior members of the staff who receive 800 francs a year!

That priests should be found in sufficient numbers to give up their lives to such work under such conditions, and that the seminaries should not be empty, shows in it-

self how marvelous is the vitality of the Church in France. And when people in other countries speak as though Catholicism were moribund in France, they would probably change their minds if they knew that the great majority even of those Catholic families which, through being in the employment of the State, are entitled to free secondary education, prefer to forego their privilege. They pay for having their sons taught at the Catholic colleges, even though they are all the time being taxed for the upkeep of expensive government schools which offer them facilities in many ways superior to those of the Catholic "free" schools. And when critics talk of the Catholic revival as being no more than the exploitation of religious sentiment by a group of politicians, they must be entirely unaware of the enormous sacrifices undertaken both by priests and by laity to keep religion alive among the children of France.

CHAPTER VI

THE CATHOLIC PRESS IN FRANCE

To judge by the complaints that may be read almost daily in the clerical newspapers and reviews in France, one might imagine that the work of creating and organizing a Catholic press had been entirely neglected. Yet these complaints are most often to be read in the publications issued by one of the most highly developed and successful organizations in all modern journalism. The *Maison de la Bonne Presse* in Paris would alone—even if there were no other journalistic activity in the Catholic movement in France—deserve the closest study by Catholics in other countries who are engaged upon the very arduous and extremely technical business of building up a Catholic press and conducting it in a way to defy the competition of non-Catholic papers. The *Maison de la Bonne Presse* with its vast industrial organization, from its own printing and photographic works to its own cinemas and theater, and with the immense circulation that it has obtained for its daily newspaper and its numerous periodicals, challenges comparison with Fleetway House or with any of the largest newspaper enterprises in England. Yet the *Maison de la Bonne Press* is only one factor in the general organization of a Catholic press in France. Great as its influence is, there are many zealous pioneers in the Catholic movement who not only believe that it might have done better and larger

work, but consider that it has done real mischief in antagonizing non-Catholic readers by its defiantly clerical tone. In estimating the extent and the power of Catholic influence in the contemporary press of France it is essential to emphasize this contrast between two opposite—one might almost say, conflicting—methods of propaganda.

The contrast may be illustrated by quoting an article which was published last summer in the *Correspondances Religieuses,* which are a series of weekly bulletins issued by a Catholic propagandist institution known as the *Maison de la Presse,* which syndicates Catholic articles and news for distribution among the French newspapers. In the issue of August 6th last there is a characteristic article under the heading "When Will the French Catholics Have a Catholic Press?" It begins by asking how many Catholics realize, when they open their newspapers every morning, that "every day *six million copies* of newspapers either prejudiced against or definitely hostile to their religion, are distributed throughout France." "The *Matin,*" it continues, "the *Journal,* and the *Petit Parisien* alone have a combined daily circulation of more than four million copies; the *Petit Parisien* has a circulation of 1½ million. Do Catholics realize that their own daily newspapers have a combined circulation of barely 600,000 copies? Six million against six hundred thousand, ten against one: such are the proportions of the opposing forces." The article goes on to point out that French Catholics contribute 30 million francs a year for the upkeep of the Church, and still more largely for the Catholic schools and boys' clubs, and the various works of Catholic charity: is it possible that they will fail to provide the millions necessary to subsidize the Catholic press? What papers, in fact, thus require these sub-

ventions? "The Bishops," continues the writer, "have shown in each diocese which papers deserve support. At the end of 1919, an organization was brought into being, with the encouragement of the Holy See and the Cardinals of France, which must be made sufficiently powerful to guarantee to the Catholic press the place to which it is entitled."

This organization is called *L'Œuvre du Franc de la Presse,* and it was approved last March and recommended to the Catholics of France by their Cardinals and Archbishops in solemn assembly in Paris. "The task before it," concludes the article, "is enormous. It is necessary to subsidize the needs, and to intensify tenfold the propaganda, of 500 Catholic local newspapers, of a score of great provincial papers, and three or four with national circulations. Catholic news agencies abroad of every sort must be established as well as Catholic advertising agencies. Paper factories will have to be founded to place us on an equal footing with the *Petit Parisien,* and a number of other indifferent or hostile dailies; we must organize the sales both among direct subscribers and for general purchase, and have in every small locality in the country our own agents and salesmen, while we must see that our own papers arrive ahead of all the others. We must, moreover, secure for the Catholic press all the best possible brains for their editorial and advertising staffs and for their news services."

This statement gives a fair idea of the vast general program of the *Maison de la Bonne Presse.* It is open to the obvious criticism that it appeals to Catholics, *as Catholics,* to support, and to assist in distributing, a press which is recommended to them principally because it is Catholic and without any apparent guarantee that the newspapers will be as competently edited and produced

as their rivals. The fact that the *Bonne Presse,* working on these lines, has built up a daily circulation of nearly 400,000 copies for *La Croix* is, however, a sufficient refutation to any charge of incompetency in the technical organization of the paper. It would be difficult to imagine any newspaper of its kind more thoroughly organized or more skillfully conducted. Pope Pius X even told its director, M. Feron-Vrau, in a private audience, that he read *La Croix* every day and "could imagine nothing better as a great Catholic newspaper." Yet, great as the compliment was, it implied a certain character in the newspaper which must inevitably be a severe handicap in competition with non-Catholic newspapers.

To put the matter bluntly, is a newspaper which the Pope declares to be exactly what he himself wants to read, likely to appeal to the ordinary Frenchman, unless he happens to have a strongly religious temperament? The *Croix* is quite obviously a clerical newspaper. Its principal shareholder, it is true, is a very important private capitalist, and its editor M. Jean Guiraud is also a layman. But since its foundation the paper has been, and continues to be, controlled with an unrelenting grip by the Assumptionist Fathers whose energy and determination created it and made it a great national success. Under their guidance it has become an admirably organized clerical newspaper—published and distributed promptly every afternoon with the other evening papers of Paris. Like them, it is dated for the following morning, since its principal sales are in the country districts, which it thus reaches with the first delivery. It contains all the principal news of the day, supplemented by special correspondence—which is usually very competent—from most of the principal cities in the world. Its leader page publishes articles dealing with the topics of the day; and

its commercial and agricultural pages give as good expert information as is to be found in other papers.

There is, however, one obvious difference between the *Croix* and the other newspapers. Its whole interests are clerical, and its selection and presentation of news are naturally colored by this outlook. While other newspapers are discussing boxing matches, or women and fashions, or murder trials, it treats these matters with as little attention as possible, and fills columns with admirably written reports of Catholic congresses or diocesan news. This detachment from current events that occupy the minds and dissipate the energies of ordinary newspaper readers, leads also to an indifference to rapidity of publication, which is characteristic of most of the French newspapers, but carried to incredible lengths in *La Croix*. It is indeed seldom that any of its special articles are published within three weeks, or even a month of their being written, and the directors think so little of immediate topical values that they do not trouble even to suppress the dates of these belated contributions. Apart from this slowness in publication, the principal criticism that any American or English journalist would have to make on the *Croix* is that it devotes a large proportion of its space to very long articles about classical literary subjects or to heavy philosophical or theological matters.

It is necessary to make these criticisms upon *La Croix* from the standpoint of modern newspaper journalism, to emphasize both its disadvantages in competing with the lay press, and the extraordinary success of its national circulation throughout France. With all its shortcomings as a modern newspaper, the *Croix* does rank as one of the most widely read in all France. You will find it in every department, however remote, and in Catholic districts like Brittany you will see it more often than

almost any other Paris newspaper. This remarkable success must, it is true, be attributed rather to the vast organization with which its circulation has been built up than to the merits of the paper itself. So far as distribution is concerned, the *Croix* has a unique advantage over the other daily papers. It is universally recognized as the official Catholic newspaper in France, even though many Catholics who dislike its frankly reactionary politics and who do not care for its selection and treatment of news consider its monopoly in this respect as something in the nature of a national calamity. Many zealous Catholics, for instance, disagree violently with its scarcely disguised distrust of the Republic, and accuse it of being still royalist in its whole political outlook. They object also on principle to its display of a crucifix at the head of its front page, and generally, they complain that the *Croix,* by its success in making itself more or less the official organ of the French hierarchy, has identified the policy of the Church and the very name "Catholic," with its own reactionary and anti-Republican tendencies. There is undoubtedly some truth in these criticisms, and the propaganda of the *Bonne Presse* has certainly not assisted those who have been striving through the past generation as Catholic Republicans to live down that distrust of the Church's loyalty to the Republic, which has been the chief cause of the anticlerical persecutions.

But the fact remains that the *Croix* is essentially the official clerical organ in France, and its wide distribution is directly due to the support that it has received in all parts of the country from the bishops and the majority of the clergy. Whenever the bishops in their pastorals or the clergy in their sermons fulminate against the "bad press" and appeal for support for the "Catholic press," in terms very similar to the article which I have quoted,

they almost invariably have the *Croix* and its subsidiary publications in mind as the papers that they wish Catholics to read. And by persistent organization they have persuaded an immense number of people throughout France to read them. It is a modest estimate to say that the *Croix* itself has a million readers every day, while the net sales of its chief weekly publication, the illustrated *Pèlerin* (which was the first journalistic venture of the *Bonne Presse,* and will this year be fifty years old) exceed half a million copies. That figure would probably be too small for the average net sales of each volume of its popular *Lives of the Saints,* while the *Pèlerin's* annual almanac sells over 600,000 copies. The list of its miscellaneous publications is very long, and many of them have regular circulations that easily reach six figures. As for the publicity department, its small "Life of Jeanne d'Arc" has already sold more than two million copies alone; while the aggregate sales of its series of popular novels are also in the third million.

It must be remembered that the circulation of the *Croix* itself, which in England would not place it in the first rank of daily newspapers, is phenomenal in France. The conditions of newspaper distribution in the two countries are very different. A London daily paper can count upon a population of some ten million people all living within at most an hour by train from its London office; while if it sets up another printing plant in Manchester it has fully ten million more people within the same immediate radius of distribution. The whole of England and the Lowlands of Scotland can be reached by either of the two offices before noon. But in Paris the available public is incomparably smaller. There are certainly not more than ten million people within the whole area from Paris to the Belgian and German frontiers and northwest to

Le Havre, while the communications, whether by road or by railway, are not nearly so well organized as in England, even for covering the district nearest to Paris within this much larger area. About one-tenth of the population of France lives in Brittany, which is so distant that the Paris newspapers cannot be delivered there till late at night; while the large populations in the south around Lyons and Marseilles and Saint-Etienne, which represent a considerable potential public for any newspaper, are much further still. And even if all the principal centers of population could be brought within reach of Paris by organization of rapid transport, they still represent less than half of the whole people of France. A country in which more than half the people still live in rural communities presents insuperable obstacles to regular newspaper distribution. It implies also that a large proportion of the people have not acquired the habit of reading newspapers.

Here indeed the *Croix* has a substantial advantage. It aims largely at catering to an old-fashioned public that has not yet got the newspaper habit. Its public consists very largely—apart from the clergy and the most zealous Catholics—of peasants scattered throughout the whole country. A very large proportion of its readers consists of direct subscribers, and the paper is probably justified in claiming that it has more direct subscribers than any other daily newspaper in the world. Its system of distribution is based to a great extent upon direct subscriptions. With the backing of the clergy it has got together a whole army of some fifty thousand voluntary salesmen, organized in 18,000 committees, all over France. One of the most recent developments of its inexhaustible resources is the employment of Catholic boy scouts as salesmen for the *Croix*. Naturally they can do no more than

increase the casual sales; but there is another still more efficacious method, in which even bedridden invalids have played a very successful part. The *Croix* is supplied at specially reduced terms whenever a dozen or more subscribers combine together; and all through France zealous workers who are thus collecting batches of subscriptions at reduced rates, never cease from their efforts to extend their number.

"I wish," declared M. Feron-Vrau, the proprietor of the *Croix,* at the last annual meeting of the shareholders, "that we had not only an organization to develop the Good Press but also an organization to destroy the Bad Press." Certainly few men living have done so much for the development and the success of Catholic journalism in their own country. The story of the *Bonne Presse* will always be inseparably associated with his name. It was the Augustinian Fathers of the Assumption who made a modest beginning with the enterprise of the *Bonne Presse* when they founded the weekly *Pèlerin* in 1873. In 1880 they founded a new and more ambitious venture entitled the *Croix,* which began as a monthly magazine, and three years later became a daily newspaper. When the anticlerical prosecutions began to rage the Assumptionists were forced to abandon their direct control, and M. Feron-Vrau assumed the responsibilities of its proprietorship in 1900. In 1908 the anticlericals, who regarded the *Maison de la Bonne Presse* as a very formidable enemy since its violent campaign during the Dreyfus trial, succeeded at last in shaking his position as well. At the beginning of that year he was suddenly dispossessed of his title-deeds to the site and the plant of the establishment, and he found himself obliged to issue an urgent appeal to all the Catholics of France to finance a new company, with a capital of 100-franc shares, for the

purpose of saving his own property from the liquidators. He appealed for two million francs, and within a fortnight three and a half millions had been subscribed. The new company was thus formed under the name of the *Société Jeanne d'Arc,* and it is now the actual proprietor of the *Bonne Presse.*

But while every credit is due to M. Feron-Vrau and his collaborators for creating this magnificent organization, so powerful that it is now in a position to give indispensable support to the many local editions of the *Croix* in various parts of France, the vital question remains for all those who are working for the same ends in different countries—how far has the *Bonne Presse* in France really succeeded in counteracting the anti-Catholic press? How many of the million daily readers of the *Croix* would be readers of anticlerical or non-Catholic papers if the *Croix* were not published? How far is it preaching only to the converted? How far is it read not by ordinary newspaper readers but by people who either buy other newspapers as well or take no interest in newspapers at all? That the *Pèlerin* and some of the other publications have acquired great popular circulations on their own merits is beyond question. They challenge competition with any other publications of the same kind and they undoubtedly have prevented millions of French boys and girls from becoming familiar with the vulgarity and the materialism of the typical children's papers in other countries. As for the *Croix* itself, I can only venture the personal opinion that it appears to be too strictly clerical to appeal to the ordinary newspaper reader. Whether it is true or not, as its critics allege, that its reactionary politics and its aggressively clerical tone have hindered rather than assisted the recovery of the Church in France, I do not presume to judge.

An outside observer may, however, express some astonishment at the persistent complaints among French Catholics as to the absence or backwardness of their Catholic press. A glance at the *Almanach Catholique* published by Mgr. Baudrillart's *"Comité des Amitiés Françaises à l'Etranger,"* shows a very imposing list of newspapers and press associations, most of which are entirely Catholic, and the rest decidedly friendly to the Catholic movement. To talk of popular newspapers like the *Petit Parisien* or the *Petit Journal,* which are chiefly newspapers with no very definite political tendencies, or even the *Matin,* as hostile to the Catholic Church seems to the foreign observer unjustified. Compared with the English press, for instance, they devote an immense proportion of space to Catholic activities—to reports of episcopal promotions, to the Pope and the Vatican generally, or to the work of distinguished French ecclesiastics. During the elections of the new Pope, however, the whole French press, with the exception of the definitely anticlerical organs like the Socialist *Œuvre* or the Bolshevist *Humanité,* gave all their principal space to it day after day. It is certainly true that, with the exception of the *Echo de Paris,* none of the half-dozen most important daily newspapers in Paris are definitely pro-Catholic. It, however, not only publishes regular Catholic news from its special correspondent M. Charles Pichon every morning, but very frequently devotes its special articles to Catholic subjects. The *Journal des Débats,* which ranks almost among the leading group of national dailies, is no less friendly to the Church. The *Figaro,* with its select aristocratic public, and the *Gaulois,* with its considerable circulation among the intellectuals, both make a special feature of their religious correspondent's articles every morning. The *Libre Parole,* which was founded in the

violently anti-Semitic atmosphere some thirty years ago, has a comparatively small circulation, but it is the recognized organ of a very important section of the Catholic movement, and its weekly supplement, giving a lucid chronicle of the principal Catholic news of the week, is an indispensable guide to foreign students. Violently opposed to the republican sympathies of the *Libre Parole,* is the royalist daily the *Action Française,* which has created for itself a very vigorous, a widely distributed, and well organized following throughout France. Most of its principal editors are Catholics of an extremely truculent type, and even its political director, M. Charles Maurras—the real author of the modern royalist movement in France—while persisting in his own convictions as an agnostic, is an out-and-out supporter of the Church, which he regards as the chief pillar in any stable constitution for France.

With such varied support in the press, the Catholics of France can hardly claim that they are badly represented, even apart from the *Croix* and its subsidiary local newspapers, which flourish in some seventy of the ninety French departments. Two of these provincial organs, which are generally called the *Croix de Province,* are daily newspapers, one in France's largest northern factory town, Lille, and the other in the south, at Grenoble. A third appears every second day in Blois, and so covers a large area of central France, while two appear twice a week. The remainder are all weekly editions, modeled largely upon or borrowed from the weekly edition of the Paris *Croix.* The war severed their close connection with the Paris headquarters, and they are now self-supporting. Before the war their combined net sales reached 600,000 copies, and although this figure has not been fully maintained since the recent development of provin-

cial editions published by the leading Paris dailies, they remain in most cases the most widely read of local papers in their own departments.

The organization of these various newspapers is considerably assisted by Catholic news agencies and syndicates. The *Maison de la Bonne Presse* is the most important of these, and it also is closely connected—through the personality of M. Feron-Vrau who is president of both Societies—with the *"Presse Régionale,"* a company formed with a capital of 3½ million francs, which owns about a dozen fairly important provincial newspapers which are all connected by special wires with its head office in Paris and are supplied by it with syndicated information and articles. Another central organization which deserves special mention is the *"Action Populaire,"* founded at Reims before the war and now rapidly resuming its old activities in Paris, which aims at providing the Catholic press with an armory of facts and information, on the same lines as the program of the Research Department of the Labor Party in London. And apart from these central organizations and newspapers, there are nearly a hundred Catholic weekly and monthly reviews, including widely read magazines of general interest like the *Revue Universelle,* one of the most brilliant of the French literary monthlies; a group of carefully edited and well documented literary and critical reviews—like *Le Correspondant* (one of the oldest reviews in France), or the Jesuits' *Les Études,* the *Revue des Jeunes* or *Les Lettres;* propagandist political organs like M. Marc Sangnier's *Démocratie Nouvelle,* or the Christian Social *L'Âme Française;* and a variety of theological and controversial periodicals.

Only the insatiable zeal of such an apostle of the modern press as M. Feron-Vrau could find inadequate so

comprehensive an organization as I have here roughly indicated. It would seem more natural to feel that there exists already an ample nucleus for the future development of a really formidable Catholic press; and certainly most of these organs and agencies give constant proof of their determination to expand. The enterprise of *Les Lettres* for instance, in organizing for the past two years a Catholic Journalists' Week in Paris, and its plans for developing its own very conscientious propaganda, are but one symptom of this widespread vitality in the Catholic press. But the avowedly Catholic organs themselves are only part of the general press campaign that has done so much to consolidate the Catholic movement. These more or less official Catholic newspapers and periodicals have served to train a whole school of brilliant and well-equipped journalists and writers who have gradually won for themselves a wider field. On the staff of almost every important newspaper or review in Paris, Catholic journalists are now to be found. In some cases, as in the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* for instance, Catholic writers have come to hold an unchallenged hegemony. Many of the most celebrated modern French writers have either been Catholics since their first entry into literature, like M. René Bazin of the French Academy or M. Charles Le Goffic, recently elected President of the national *Société des Gens de Lettres.* Others, like M. Henri Lavedan or M. Maurice Barrès in the French Academy, or M. Léon Daudet in the Académie Goncourt, have reverted to Catholicism after the vagaries of their youth, and are now conspicuous figures in all Catholic literary activities. And it may be questioned whether the influence of these popular writers, who have won their reputations among a far wider public than is included in the Catholic movement, is not more effective

as an agency of Catholic propaganda than is that of the strictly clerical writers, the limitations of whose interests naturally confine the extent of their appeal.

The conviction that strictly proclerical propaganda can never reach the widest public is perhaps the most characteristic feature of a different, and magnificently successful enterprise in another part of France. To my own mind the founders and organizers of that great Catholic newspaper which circulates all over northwestern France, the *Ouest Éclair,* not only have worked along the lines that promise the widest success, but have created an enterprise that may well serve as a model to organizers of the Catholic press all over the world. There is no other daily paper quite like the *Ouest Éclair* in France. To the casual reader it appears simply as an extraordinarily well produced, comprehensive and admirably edited provincial daily paper. It would be difficult to imagine any provincial paper more capably edited. As a general newspaper it contains no less of the important topical news from day to day than any of the big newspapers in Paris. Its news is moreover selected with a real sense of news values from the point of view of the ordinary reader. Its standard of reporting, as well as its whole special correspondence, is remarkably high, and gives dignity to the paper. From a technical point of view it is, moreover, far superior to the great majority of French newspapers. Its type is much clearer, and its printing is—unlike that of most provincial papers in France—clean and firm. Instead of being a loosely composed, unwieldy sheet of four or six pages, it is of a smaller size, and there is never room for a spare line on any page. It has never less than eight pages; on Sundays it runs to twelve, and I understand that in the near future this is to be its minimum size. It is, in short, one of the

three or four really first-rate provincial dailies that exist in France. It differs from the others in the fact that it was founded, nearly a quarter of a century ago now, expressly as a Catholic newspaper. It has remained ever since in the hands of the zealous Catholics who founded it as a serious experiment, intended to challenge the non-Catholic newspapers on their own ground. Its whole staff is definitely Catholic, and consequently its whole policy and outlook upon the world is not only implicitly, but actively Catholic.

The *Ouest Éclair* is in fact the realization of a dream that has inspired many minds in many countries. If France may well be proud of the *Bonne Presse,* she has perhaps even greater reason to be proud of the *Ouest Éclair.* I can imagine no enterprise of the kind achieving a more complete and unqualified success. Founded as a small but ambitious venture by a small group of young pioneers, with utterly inadequate resources at their disposal, it has become one of the principal daily newspapers in France. It has literally driven the great Paris dailies out of the field in the remoter parts of its own wide area of distribution, while it has acquired an influence and a circulation that defy all comparison with those of the other local papers of the same region. It has become a great popular institution, supported by people of every sort, including thousands of families to whom no other daily newspaper would make any appeal. It is true that the northwest corner of France in which it circulates offers exceptional scope for a great provincial paper. Except for the densely populated area around, and to the north and east of Paris, France is so thinly populated that there is no considerable public for any important local newspaper, and neither sufficient volume of business nor sufficient enterprise, to offer any possibility of obtain-

ing the large advertising revenue which is indispensable to any newspaper's expansion. Journals like the *Yorkshire Post,* or *Liverpool Courier,* or the *Manchester Guardian* in England could never have been built up except on the basis of overcrowded industrial populations and vast industrial wealth. In France such conditions are nowhere to be found on a large scale outside of Paris and the northeast. But the northwest, while it contains no great industrial cities, does include a very considerable population. The five departments running out into the Atlantic, which constitute the province of Brittany, are all thickly populated with small farms and fishing villages, and a number of fair-sized ports; while the adjoining province of Normandy, with its great economic advantages for producing food for the English markets only a few hours away across the Channel, is also both rich and heavily populated all along the coast. South of Brittany also, along the coast from Nantes to La Rochelle, there are more people than in most parts of France. And of the whole of this region, reaching west to Brest and Lorient, north to Saint-Malo and Cherbourg, east to Le Mans and even as far as Le Havre, south to Nantes and La Rochelle, the geographical center is the old town of Rennes. If it had been chosen after a deliberate study of the map with a view to organizing the distribution of a modern newspaper, its situation could scarcely have been improved.

Yet it was sheer accident that made Rennes the birthplace of the *Ouest Éclair.* Its first number appeared one morning in August, 1899, at a time when Rennes—which had been selected for the second hearing of the great Dreyfus trial as the town in France most likely to afford a reasonably quiet political atmosphere—was filled with an extraordinary collection of journalists, diplomats, sol-

diers, and politicians, from every part of France and every country in the world. The courage and the instinct for dramatic moments which have made the subsequent success of the *Ouest Éclair* are shown in the choice of that occasion for its first appearance. It had not, however, come into existence, as so many other journals did at that time, to add yet another voice to the babel that roared around the name of the little Alsatian Jew. Its directors had a much more ambitious program, but they saw in the moment of public excitement their opportunity for making a favorable start. The real authors of the venture—who remain still its two principal directors—were then two young men, the Abbé Trochu, who was a junior curate in the diocese of Rennes, and a young naval officer, M. Emmanuel Desgrées du Lou, who had resigned his commission in the navy in order to become a barrister in Rennes and, still more, to be free to devote himself to the propaganda of the Catholic social program enunciated in the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII. The Abbé Trochu had the same ideals, and the two men had met at various congresses in connection with the Catholic democratic movement. They had become friends, and together conceived the idea of founding a provincial daily newspaper which would be devoted to the development of the Christian democratic program. They interested others in their project also, and by the time that the Dreyfus trial was to take place in Rennes they had got together a capital of 80,000 francs (in those days roughly $16,000) with which—as they saw no hope of increasing the amount—they determined to make their great adventure. As might have been expected, the money was all spent within a few weeks, and the paper was faced with the necessity of closing down unless more was forthcoming. It had attracted a good deal of

attention, but no new capital came to their assistance. Determined not to abandon their experiment, the original shareholders each agreed to mortgage a considerable part of his private resources; and so the *Ouest Éclair* carried on. The first year's balance sheet showed a formidable deficit. But what ambitious modern newspaper has fared otherwise at its inception? It had at least become clear that, if its directors did not lose courage, it would win through. Its history, even if considered merely as a provincial newspaper, is full of interest for the student of modern journalism.

It was directed from the outset with an altogether exceptional talent for newspaper organization. When it was first launched, the original idea had been, naturally enough, that M. Desgrées du Lou should undertake the chief administrative responsibilities, while the Abbé Trochu was to act as editor-in-chief, and inspire the general policy of the paper. But it was found almost at once that their respective positions would have to be changed. M. Desgrées du Lou had no training in business affairs and very soon realized that he had no aptitude for them; while the young priest discovered himself to be possessed of organizing qualities and a financial instinct that, if he had devoted himself to making money, would have made him one of the greatest industrial organizers in France. So gradually the two directors changed the rôles that had been allotted to them; and at the present time M. Desgrées du Lou remains the political director of the paper, while the Abbé Trochu is its administrative head. It would be impossible to say which contributed more largely to making the paper a success. It was in every sense a new and bold departure. In politics it adopted a line which in Brittany was at that time regarded with bitter hostility. Most Catholic of the French

provinces, Brittany had remained more or less steadfastly monarchist even to the end of the last century. The old idea that no good Catholic could also be a Republican was still widely accepted among the people, while the political leaders, and to a large extent the clergy also, openly proclaimed it as an indisputable fact. But the group of pioneers who founded the *Ouest Éclair* were Republicans not only because they considered that the monarchy in France was irrevocably overthrown, but because they really believed in the Republic as the most suitable form of government for their country. They came before the people of northwestern France as avowed Republicans, whose chief object in life was to advance the cause of Catholic democracy.

It was only to be expected that, in the beginning at least, they should to some extent fall between two stools. The Catholics of the old school regarded them as apostates; the parties of the Left regarded them as Jesuits in disguise, attempting to capture the Republican movement in Brittany. Both parties watched their development with jealousy and with suspicion. Soon the indignation of the old Catholic politicians could contain itself no longer. Within the second year of its existence the *Ouest Éclair* was confronted with a rival Catholic newspaper, the *Nouvelliste de Bretagne,* founded by the reactionary Catholics with the express object of driving the Republican organ out of existence. The new paper commanded greatly superior resources. It had a capital of a million francs, and it had the most powerful political backing in Brittany. But it had no personality to guide it, and above all it was utterly devoid of any organizing genius fit to compete with that of the Abbé Trochu. At the end of two years the *Nouvelliste* had exhausted its resources, and the company that founded it went into liquidation.

It was bought up and revived by another group, of similar tendencies, who ran it for five years more until they too had to quit the field, having lost another million francs. Yet a third company then intervened which still keeps the *Nouvelliste* in existence, and has established it as a fairly stable provincial paper. But it is no longer in any sense a serious rival to the *Ouest Éclair*.

The competition with the reactionary *Nouvelliste* was probably one of the chief factors in the success of the *Ouest Éclair*. It freed it once and for all from the atmosphere of suspicion that had prevented it from winning the confidence of the democratic parties; and instead of being regarded as a Conservative organ, it gained a new popularity, not only for its astonishing journalistic enterprise, but as a courageous and progressive organ of opinion. Politicians who had hitherto ignored its existence began to give it encouragement, and still more, began to find it an invaluable platform for their own purposes. It acquired a definite position in politics. But while it was thus consolidating its political influence, it was gaining ground every day by its enterprise as a provincial newspaper. There had been nothing of the kind in Brittany and the northwest before. Two of the Paris dailies, the *Petit Parisien* and the *Petit Journal,* had begun to send special editions there, which arrived late at night or on the following morning; but the provincial newspaper was a wholly new idea. The *Ouest Éclair* not only concentrated on questions of local significance—and Brittany has many such interests that scarcely concern the rest of France—but began to organize a rapid news service from its own special correspondents in every important center. It has gone on developing this service to such an extent that it now publishes eight separate editions. The leading page and the principal news page,

as well as the advertisement pages, remain the same in each, but the main part of the paper, which gives a summary of all the local news of any importance or interest, varies according to the district for which it is intended; so that its readers in Rennes find the principal columns devoted to their own local news, while those in Le Mans or in Nantes or in Brest find the same columns filled with reports concerning their own affairs. All this development of the local news service, as well as the whole organization of its supply of information—the installation of a private wire from Paris, the selection of special correspondents, the enlistment of well known writers, has been mainly the work of the Abbé Trochu. To him, too, is chiefly due the credit for the enormous development of the paper's advertising revenue, and the magnificent organization of its system of distribution.

In an enterprise which has assumed the proportions of the *Ouest Éclair,* with its immense daily circulation, with its dozen weekly newspapers for each of the departments in which it circulates, and with its various subsidiary enterprises, it is not possible to apportion the measure of success that is due to each of the directing personalities. The war, throwing the whole weight of responsibility upon the Abbé Trochu's shoulders, revealed in him a genius for rapid and versatile organization which would entitle him to rank among the most brilliant organizers of industry in any country. By 1914 the continued success of the paper was amply assured. It had even paid a small dividend at the end of the second year; and in the succeeding years there were very considerable profits—a great part of which was set aside to build up substantial reserves. The expenses required to meet the growing development of the paper, had, however necessitated further calls upon those who had sub-

scribed the original capital, and it had before long been raised to the figure of 560,000 francs (at present exchange more than $30,000) which remains the present capital of the company. Considering that the actual paper used in any one day's editions of the *Ouest Éclair* costs 10,000 francs at least, to say nothing of wages and salaries and rents and the vast expenditure that has been involved in the magnificent modern machinery and equipment of the newspaper offices and works, the capital seems ludicrously small. For the shareholders, however—who are still the original pioneers and the actual creators of the enterprise—it has meant handsome dividends; and it is no secret that the annual gross profits frequently exceed the capital upon which the dividends have to be paid. Its prosperity was fairly established when the war broke out, and during the war its circulation increased prodigiously. In the absence of the managing director and most of his principal colleagues on the administrative side, the Abbé Trochu had to undertake their work as well as his own, besides facing unprecedented demands upon the resourcefulness of all newspaper proprietors. The Abbé Trochu rose magnificently to every emergency. He organized and developed his service of war news to such an extent that his circulation increased within a very short time from 80,000 to 400,000 copies a day.

Then he was suddenly confronted with the impossibility of obtaining paper. To get paper from Scandinavia to France was impossible: America was the only source of supply that could be considered. But all the available shipping accommodation was already commandeered. Single-handed as he was, the Abbé Trochu decided to add to his crushing burden of work a new enterprise. With no more knowledge of shipping than he had had

of printing or of advertising when he founded the *Ouest Éclair,* he bought four ships, found them crews (at a time when every able-bodied man was engaged on war work) and commissioned them to bring him back paper from the other side of the Atlantic. Having embarked upon this new adventure, he realized that it also had great commercial possibilities if it was courageously handled. Not content with becoming a shipowner for a specific purpose, he planned out a complete itinerary for them by which they went first to England with a French cargo from Saint-Malo, then to Lisbon with an English cargo, thence with a Portuguese cargo to Newfoundland, and from there with yet another cargo to the United States. Large profits were to be made by those who cared to risk their fortunes on the seas in those days, and when the four ships found, on their arrival in America, that part of the paper supplies were not yet ready for delivery, they cabled for permission to sail back to France, and set out on the same round again. Two of the four ships were sunk by submarines on their second homeward journey, but the other two brought their cargoes of paper safely to Brittany. These ships still remain the property of the Abbé Trochu, who—being unwilling to sell them at the low prices that prevailed after the war—proceeded to develop his first experiment by sending them out to Newfoundland to catch cod. This in its turn has led to yet another enterprise, for the Abbé found that there was no factory for curing cod in Brittany, and that the fish had to be taken to Bordeaux. So once again he ventured, and his various enterprises now include a fish-curing business which he has established at Saint-Servan.

I give the details of this episode as an illustration of the enterprise and the powers of swift organization that

have gone to make the *Ouest Éclair* what it is today. Among other instances of the same qualities I should mention yet another development that originated likewise in the Abbé Trochu's herculean administration of the newspaper during the war. At the same time that paper supplies were running short, while the circulation of the *Ouest Éclair* was leaping upwards, the distribution of the newspapers was becoming paralyzed by the curtailment of railway services and by the difficulty of maintaining any regular motor transport system. With its wide area of action, the *Ouest Éclair* was threatened by the loss of the huge sales it had built up in distant towns like Brest or Nantes or Cherbourg unless it could assure absolute regularity of delivery. The Abbé Trochu ransacked the whole department of which Rennes is the capital to obtain an adequate fleet of motor cars. To find reliable vehicles was difficult enough: to find drivers for them was all but hopeless. Once again he decided to get the whole organization into his own hands. He established a special garage in Rennes for the *Ouest Éclair,* which by the end of the first year had cost the paper little short of a million francs. But the garage still remains. It has become one of the most important in the city, and its commercial business for private firms now brings in nearly half a million francs of profit to the newspaper. The same story could be told about the utilization of waste products. All the discarded and unused ends of paper are turned into stationery or sold for bookmaking, and the large bookshop and stationery office attached to the newspaper is yet another flourishing business, which helps to swell the profits of the whole enterprise and to strengthen and extend its development.

It will be seen that in its own way the *Ouest Éclair* has been an even greater financial success than the *Bonne*

Presse. Restricting its activity to a provincial sphere, and relying solely on its own merits as a newspaper, it has achieved a solid prosperity and established an invincible influence in the public life of northwestern France. The *Bonne Presse* has worked on other lines. Its success, which could certainly never have been secured without consummate organizing ability, has been assisted to a very large extent by the systematic support of the clergy and by the fact that it has undertaken to become the principal religious publishing house in France. No real comparison of the two ventures can therefore be made; and it is not for a foreign observer to start such invidious controversies. But it is of vital importance for those who are working at the organization of a Catholic press in other countries to discover as far as possible what has been the effective influence of both types of Catholic journalism. It may be said that France, with the *Bonne Presse* and the *Ouest Éclair* actually affords an almost ideal model of each type. It is unfortunate that the political differences that set both papers in opposition to one another have led in northwestern France to a determined rivalry between the republican *Ouest Éclair* and the reactionary *Nouvelliste* (of which M. Feron-Vrau, the proprietor of the *Croix,* is now the principal director). And, whether it be due to political reasons or to a decided preference among the French peasants for one sort of journalism rather than another, the fact has to be noted that the *Ouest Éclair* has at least ten times the circulation of its rival. It caters, it is true, for a much wider public, and its magnificent organization enables it to supply districts where the *Nouvelliste* can scarcely penetrate. But it can hardly be doubted that with its progressive politics, its much more comprehensive news service, its brilliant special articles by writers who are not only of the very

highest distinction, but are alert and practised journalists, with its popular competitions, and its pages of sporting news—it must naturally appeal to a far wider public than its rival, which concentrates chiefly upon more or less ecclesiastical information.

Whether this deliberate catering to the modern public taste in journalism is to be recommended in preference to the more sober and serious journalism which the *Bonne Presse* has brought to a fine art, is another matter. But it is difficult to resist the argument constantly put forward in their own justification by the directors of the *Ouest Éclair*—that they have not only created a newspaper which has throughout treated as its first object the fulfillment of its original mission to popularize and extend the doctrines of Christian democracy, but has so securely established its own position that no anticlerical newspaper could now be founded in Brittany. That is, of course, a point of immense importance. Overwhelmingly Catholic as Brittany still remains, there is no doubt that if it had not been for the *Ouest Éclair* there would have been a free field either for the non-Catholic Paris newspapers or for the creation of a definitely anticlerical provincial newspaper in support of M. Briand and his socialist colleagues in the northwest. And this necessity to prevent the formation of an anticlerical press is still greater in other parts of France where Catholic influence is neither so strong nor so well organized. But while the *Ouest Éclair* has in this respect achieved what the directors of the *Bonne Presse*, working on their more restricted lines could never have done, it must be remembered that the success of the *Ouest Éclair* is of a kind that requires the rarest genius to produce. The Abbé Trochu stands in the front rank of the great newspaper creators of his generation; and such men are unfortu-

nately hard to find. The work of the *Bonne Presse* requires less highly specialized ability, and can always rely upon organized support on a national scale. But while the *Bonne Presse* offers a model of Catholic press organization that is more susceptible of imitation in other countries, the *Ouest Éclair* is so magnificent an achievement that of the two enterprises its study is likely to provide more fruitful lessons.

CHAPTER VII

THE CATHOLIC TRADE UNIONS

It is upon the *Syndicats Chrétiens,* or Catholic trade unions, that the leaders of the Catholic movement in France have concentrated their most determined efforts. If it were possible to estimate the extent of their real influence in the world of French labor politics, we would have a fair measure of the social and political importance of the Catholic movement itself. But any such estimate is unfortunately impossible. The French trade unions, of all sorts, are so different from the analogous working-class organizations in other countries that even a comparison of numerical strength is of no real value. At no time has there been in France anything like the same weight of trade union membership as in England or in Germany or in the United States. While in most other countries since the war—in Italy as in Germany and Great Britain, or in Central Europe as in Scandinavia—there has been a steady and enormous increase in the number of organized workers, in France on the other hand there has been such a diminution of membership in the principal old trade union organization, the *Confédération Générale du Travail,* that it has all but ceased to have any effective influence in France. Before the war it was one of the most vital and formidable trade union federations in Europe. It had introduced "sabotage" as a recognized method of industrial warfare, which was

beginning to strike terror among the big employers of every country. It was also bringing about a new phase of the industrial movement throughout Europe, which tended to supersede the old gospel and the old methods of Marxian socialism by the doctrines of Syndicalism and the weapon of the "sympathetic strike."

During the war, trade unionism became suspect in France owing to the pacifist tendencies of many of its former leaders. Public opinion among all classes in France was so overwhelmingly concentrated upon the war, as long as the German armies were still fighting on French soil and so near to Paris that the sound of bombardments could be heard on most nights in the capital itself, that the revolutionary tendencies which asserted themselves elsewhere in Europe could obtain no serious hold. Immediately after the war, and during the years of demobilization, there was a brief period in which the trade unions experienced a revival. But the ferment of revolutionary unionism rose too quickly, and by precipitating a gratuitous general strike on the railways in the summer of 1920, the revolutionaries stampeded orthodox French trade unionism into sheer catastrophe. The railway strike broke down in ignominious and abject failure and resulted at once in a landslide away from the *Confédération Générale du Travail*. Its membership fell within a few months afterwards from somewhere about two millions (it is impossible to obtain exact or reliable figures concerning the old trade union movement in France) to well under a million. It went on falling till it was little more than half a million. Then this remnant of disillusioned unionism split violently into two contending factions, over the question of affiliation with Moscow. A bare majority voted against any such affiliation—partly through genuine dislike of Bolshevism, but still more

through the knowledge that all France was overwhelmingly anti-Bolshevik. The minority thereupon refused to accept the decision of the majority and seized the C.G.T. headquarters; and for some time afterwards there were violent conflicts between the two sections. And the split naturally led to a still further decline in the membership of the C.G.T., from which it is only now very slowly recovering.

Such a situation obviously gave unrivaled opportunity to the organizers of the Catholic trade unions, and they have availed themselves of it to the utmost. But before discussing the remarkable record of their recent successes and their continuous growth, it is necessary first to explain how there came to be such organizations at all. Trade unionism, until the Catholic social movement began to grow throughout Europe under the inspiration of Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals, was generally speaking, anathema to all devout Catholics in France. The word "Catholic" on the other hand was equally obnoxious to the great majority of the town populations who were susceptible to industrial organization, and who had for several generations more or less completely lost touch with the Church in France. In such conditions the social revolutionary movement, as it spread from Germany into France, naturally assumed a strongly anti-Catholic tendency. Marx and Engels and its principal authors in Central Europe were mostly Jews, preaching a passionate gospel of republicanism and class warfare. Their disciples in France naturally regarded as their irreconcilable enemies the Catholics, who were generally suspected of an impenitent royalism, and their Church, which condemned all teaching of class hatreds, which refused to regard poverty as a thing disgraceful in itself, which actually encouraged congregations of men and women

to adopt poverty as a permanent condition of life, and which taught obedience to the laws as one of the civic virtues. This fundamental incompatibility between Catholic teaching and that of the revolutionary socialists led, particularly in France, to a rooted distrust of the Church by the industrial working classes, while the traditional prejudices of the French clergy ranged them among the strongest opponents of the trade unions in the beginning. Inevitably the trade union movement became not only anti-Catholic but definitely and avowedly anticlerical; and when great Catholics like the Comte de Mun and the Marquis de la Tour du Pin sought to devote themselves to a practical realization of the social doctrines of Leo XIII, they found themselves regarded with deep suspicion on the part of the working classes, while the anticlerical revolutionary leaders did all in their power to discredit their efforts on behalf of the workers.

Such conditions gave rise to the Catholic trade unions. On the one hand the Catholics found themselves paralyzed by this universal suspicion of their motives, whenever they desired to play an active part in improving the material conditions of life among the poor. They were shut out from the confidence of the working classes and must either join the rising forces of trade unionism, or create new working-class organizations for themselves. At the same time they found that the many legitimate and well-founded grievances of the working classes were forcing them to throw in their lot with the revolutionary agitators, and to support men who made violently anticlerical propaganda part of their stock in trade as trade union organizers. For in France more than elsewhere, the typical trade union organizer was always proud of his fanaticism; and the familiar "trade union diplomacy" of the English trade unionists has always been treated

with contempt. In France the trade unions, with their small but select memberships, are not composed of ordinary working-class men but for the most part of intellectuals or professional agitators; and the French trade unions have consequently always been associated with direct action, with a decided inclination to exploit the dramatic possibilities of street conflicts, *"les éventualités de la rue."* Such an attitude towards social problems, apart from all question of anticlerical propaganda conducted by the socialist trade unions, was contrary to the whole social training and the political philosophy, not only of aristocratic reformers like de Mun or Montalembert, but of all devout Catholics.

The latest figures which have been issued by the French Ministry of Labor do not go further than the first day of 1920. At that time there were in France 5,076 employers' associations with a total membership of 379,855; and a slightly larger number (5,283) of workers' unions, with an aggregate membership of 1,083,967 (of whom 239,000 were women); as well as 175 "mixed" associations of employers and employed with 31,806 members; while the largest group of trade unions—though many of them cannot be strictly described as such, since they more nearly resemble what we would call coöperative societies—are the agricultural *"syndicats,"* of which there were 6,519 with a total membership of 1,083,967. Since that date, however, these totals must have been profoundly modified. The former secretary general of the C.G.T. declared at Mulhouse in August, 1921, that, since the split broke up the old organization, its aggregate membership had declined from two millions in 1920 to 700,000 at the time he was speaking. The "unified" or definitely pro-Bolshevik section of the C.G.T. almost certainly does not include more than a hundred thousand

members, and very little credence is given to the statements by its official organ that it has more than treble that membership, and that their personnel is greatly superior in every respect to that of the old C.G.T.

The familiar complaint laid by the socialists against the Catholic trade unions in recent years is that they are no more than artificial creations, brought into being and supported by the Catholic conservatives as a means of safeguarding their own vested interests, whether as employers or as ecclesiastics. But the earliest origins of these Catholic trade unions knew nothing of the distinguished patronage that is now lavished upon their successors all over France. They were unquestionably inspired and directed by religious influences in the beginning, but it was the humblest of ecclesiastics working among the poor who brought them into existence. It was one of the Christian Brothers, Brother Diéron, who first got together a handful of seventeen young employees in 1887 and persuaded them to constitute themselves into a trade union which has since become the nucleus of the Catholic trade union movement. And it was a nun, one of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, who, fifteen years later and only twenty-one years ago now, first gathered together in the back premises of a small workshop eighteen nurses, fifteen girl employees, and fifteen working girls, and set them also on the road to found what is now one of the most important women's trade unions in France, the *Union Centrale des Syndicats Professionnels Féminins*. Ecclesiastical guidance and encouragement has therefore assisted and fostered the movement since its inception; but they were the most modest of ecclesiastics, who understood modern France and who felt very deeply for the poor and the defenceless.

Trade unionism in France and in England presents very

different aspects. In England the ordinary workingman is usually a member of at least one trade union. In France the trade unionist is in these days almost always a rather exceptional person who takes an unusual interest in industrial politics. Thus it is that the oldest and most important of the Catholic trade unions—the *Syndicat des Employés du Commerce et de l'Industrie,* which was founded in 1887, quite recently celebrated with great exultation the fact that it had reached a total membership of 10,000. The Catholic railwaymen's unions are similarly small in numbers; their combined total is only some 20,000, but their influence was sufficient to play a determining part in crushing the railway strike of two years ago. Almost every sort of trade or profession is included in the federation which has grown out of the first federation founded in 1913, and which moved into its present headquarters at the Rue Cadet two years ago. When the original *Syndicat des Employés du Commerce et de l'Industrie* was able to announce proudly in 1889 that it now counted a hundred members, its treasurer had to draw attention to the fact that only three of them had paid their subscriptions regularly. When twenty-four years later the same union decided to acquire the new offices in the Rue Cadet the members subscribed little less than half a million francs for this purpose. The present *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens* was the outcome of a national congress held in November, 1919, which was attended by delegates of some 350 unions, representing an aggregate membership of 100,000 unionists. Six months later a second congress was called to give formal realization to the proposal for a wider Federation, and the number of unions represented had risen between the congresses of November and of May to 578, representing a membership of 140,000. In

these totals are included the membership of several special federations such as the *Fédération des Syndicats Professionnels Féminins* or the *Fédération des Cheminots de France,* which would in England correspond roughly to national trade unions. Not all the various Catholic trade unions scattered throughout France are yet affiliated to the Central Confederation, but at the last Congress the total membership was announced as including roughly 750 different unions and an aggregate of some 125,000 workers. Among the more important trades represented in these totals are Furnishing, Building, Jewelry, Clothing, Chemicals, Motor Cars, Engineering, and Groceries.

But how much do all these miscellaneous trade organizations really stand for? The smallness of their numbers would suggest that they have been organized by priests who realize the importance of social reform and who have used their influence among devout Catholic families to get their women and their younger members to join these *"syndicats."* That is, of course, what any socialist trade unionist in France will tell you—that the Catholic trade unions are nothing more than "clerical propaganda." But it is not even true that the movement owes its beginnings to such deliberate political strategy on the part of the French clergy, although it is obviously true that the active assistance of the clergy has been of enormous assistance to the movement. On the question of the eight-hour day, for instance, the Catholic unions have taken as firm a stand as any one else; and in so doing they have mobilized on the side of labor, in one of its most formidable struggles, the whole-hearted support of a mass of conservative Catholic influence in the *Chambre des Députés* and in the *Sénat* which would have otherwise been instinctively opposed to the demands of labor. To this friendly attitude on the part of the

conservatives must be attributed a great deal of the solid success that in several cases has placed the Catholic trade unions in the forefront of labor agitations in France. Thus, it was the *Fédération des Employés Catholiques du Commerce et de l'Industrie* that in 1921 got Parliament to grant the clerical workers the same privilege of reduced railway fares that was already given to manual workers; and the ceaseless instigation of the Catholic trade unions had far more effect than all the protests of the C.G.T. in forcing the *Bloc National* parliament to take social reform seriously. Their candidates have moreover succeeded brilliantly in municipal elections and have attained an astonishingly large proportion of representation upon official Labor Councils through the whole country. Their women's union has intervened very effectively in the agitation to enforce a weekly half-holiday, and in negotiations to regulate conditions of work in the banks, in the dressmaking and perfumery trades. In Bordeaux they have secured an important agreement concerning work in the retail trades. In the southeast a characteristic union was formed by a few Catholic women workers to protest against a frankly revolutionary strike in the silk trade. This union, like so many others, has taken root and flourished; and in various parts of the country it is now found that most of the workers' representatives who form conciliation boards are members of Catholic trade unions.

The Catholic trade unions have in fact demonstrated that a social organization which remains devoutly and openly Catholic, which carries the banner of the Church side by side with that of democracy, can not only survive ridicule but become an extremely powerful force. At their annual congresses the various unions invariably invite their chaplains or some notable ecclesiastic to honor

them with his presence. The more important congresses open their proceedings by sending messages of homage to the Pope, while they generally include an apostolic blessing from a Cardinal or an Archbishop. At the last congress of the national confederation for instance, Mgr. Ceretti, the Papal Envoy to France, presided, and every one present knelt while he recited the benediction after a brief opening speech. It is an extraordinary sight to find a trade union congress meeting with a crucifix hanging on its walls, and with a large attendance of the most celebrated members of the clergy in Paris.

From the purely industrial point of view the congress was of obvious importance. There were more than 150 delegates present from all parts of France, from Lille and Roubaix in the northeast to Saint-Etienne and Toulouse in the southwest, from Nantes and Saint-Nazaire and Fougères in Brittany, to Strasbourg or Marseilles or Nice. The report on the year's working, presented by M. Gaston Tessier, showed that in spite of the general discouragement which has depressed the whole trade union movement in France, the Catholic trade unions' Confederation had consolidated its existing position and made very substantial progress. Forty-five new unions had been founded during the past twelve months, the number of local or district trade federations had increased from seventeen to twenty-three; and the number of national trade federations is now seven instead of three last year. The result of this steady expansion is that the federation now represents in all 753 different trade organizations and extends to seventy-eight out of a total of ninety departments in the whole of France. Even in Algeria the movement has taken root, and a railwaymen's Catholic union was founded there this year. The total membership of the federation has now reached 125,000.

As for the general activities of the unions, their propaganda is conducted in every favorable direction. The official propagandists of the movement have orders to refrain from controversy on any subject not immediately concerned with their economic mission, but even so the secretary of the federation claims proudly that they have on various occasions successfully confronted propagandists of the communist organizations. This direct avowal of the desire to defeat the communist organizations is one of the most remarkable features of the Catholic trade union propaganda. It explains in part the bitter resentment felt against it by the older trade union agitators. It is not surprising that they have never forgotten the successful efforts of the Catholic unions to checkmate the railway strike of 1920, and it is a remarkable sign of their self-confidence that the Catholic unionists should persist in boasting openly that they played so conspicuous a part in breaking the strike. One might have thought that such boasts of having defeated any sort of action by organized labor would have done the Catholic union movement so much harm as to kill it altogether. Conditions in France, however, are so different from those in England that on the contrary the movement gathers strength from this open defiance of revolutionary propaganda. The fact that its leaders are known to be vigorously opposed to any form of extreme labor action has strengthened rather than weakened their influence. They have inspired their followers with the confidence that they will not be led into foolish enterprises, and at the same time they have gone far towards convincing the employers that whatever they demand is usually reasonable, and will consequently have the support of public opinion.

They have, however, taken an active part in strikes.

They were prominently concerned in the prolonged strike among the textile workers of the district around Roubaix and Lille in the autumn of 1921. They played a leading part in another important strike in Alsace on a similar question of opposing excessive reductions in wages. Their record in this respect has been consistent and remarkable. When they have set their minds to make a stand for any question of labor rights, they have always fought hard and to the end. The capitalists have come to regard them as specially formidable once they are aroused, because they can generally rely upon the wholehearted and active support of the local clergy, and quite possibly of the Bishop, while the whole Catholic press throughout France will back them unreservedly. Such backing from the most generous and public-spirited section of the French people on any large question of principle may easily involve almost unlimited resources to supplement the strike funds of the unions.

A notable instance of the extent of this general support for any clear issue of principle on which the Catholic unions have taken a stand was the question of whether or not the law which enforces Sunday closing was to be encroached upon. The Catholic trade unions immediately gave the lead to the movement of protest against certain proposals which had been made by large employers in Paris and elsewhere. The attempt to encroach upon the workers' Sunday rest has been already carried to lengths which are quite unjustifiable. A clause in the act, which permits the local police authorities to authorize the opening of shops on certain festival days of local character, has been interpreted in many cases to cover either the Sunday which falls before a particular holiday during the week or even some of the principal festivals of the year. A serious attempt was made at the

end of 1921 to keep the large general shops in Paris open by invoking this clause to cover Christmas Day, regardless of the fact that the employees were doubly entitled to their holiday because Christmas Day happened to fall on a Sunday. Arrangements to keep some of the largest stores open had actually been made, and it was only the determined intervention of the whole trade union movement in threatening a simultaneous general strike that prevented the plan from being carried out. The incident raised the question of Sunday closing in an acute form.

About the same time another similar issue had to be settled. The Postmaster General gave notice that, in response to overwhelming insistence on the part of commercial interests throughout the country, he proposed to resume the delivery of letters on Sundays in the provincial towns. The traders had pointed out that they could more quickly recover from the prevailing crisis in trade if they were given increased postal facilities during the week-ends, and the government accordingly decided to meet their wishes. There was no question of making the existing staff at post offices work overtime. The Post Office agreed to take on a new staff of men and women to do the necessary extra work and so to arrange the distribution of their time that each employee would have to take his turn at Sunday duty and have his holiday some other day during the week instead. The number of hours to be worked each week would not be increased. But the Catholic trade unions were up in arms against this proposal at once. They protested with all their force to the Government and raised a really notable agitation in the country, appealing to the public against it on grounds of public economy. It was a striking example of the difference between their attitude and that of ordinary trade unionism. Instead of rejoicing that the

whole working class would benefit by the fact that the government would now have to take on several thousands of additional employees, they protested that such a step was unnecessary and their main objection to the obligation to work on Sunday was essentially religious. They attacked the proposal on the ground that it would interfere with their religious duties and still more that it would break up their family life by preventing the workers from spending their weekly holiday at home among their children. The agitation grew quickly. Every Catholic organization of any importance in the country decided to throw in its weight to prevent the new regulations from being enforced. Organizations like the *Association de la Jeunesse Française* passed resolutions in every district condemning it and pledging their members never to use the posts if they could possibly avoid it on Sundays, and to post letters over the week-end only when it was absolutely unavoidable. A huge mass meeting was held at the *Salle Wagram* in Paris, where Cardinal Dubois as Archbishop of Paris came and presided, and formally promised his support, material as well as moral, in every way possible.

It is significant indeed that this general mobilization of the Catholic forces did not avail to prevent the post offices from being opened on Sundays. Probably the Catholic traders felt as much as any one else the need for postal deliveries during the week-ends. In any case it is questionable whether modern business conditions do not require and compel such concessions, just as they compel continuous work day and night in certain factories. But the protest which thus grew up out of the initiative taken by the Catholic trade unions was eminently characteristic of modern France. The speeches made at the meeting in the *Salle Wagram* are well worth studying. No one could

have fairly said that it was merely a spectacular attempt by the Cardinal Archbishop to identify himself with a popular cause among his people. Nor could any one who listened to the speeches have accused M. Zirnheld, for instance, of uttering pious sentiments and quoting Pope Leo XIII merely to gratify or flatter the distinguished ecclesiastics on his platform. The speeches all rang true. And when M. Zirnheld declared that they were fighting for the preservation of the right to Sunday rest on principle, and that they would accept no other day in the week as being a substitute for what they demanded, he obviously meant what he said. Equally sincere was his declaration that they believed no true social progress to be possible or worth fighting for that was not based upon the application of Christian teaching.

There was a remarkable effect of symbolism about the whole agitation. Speakers who dealt with the technical side of the question protested that, with telegrams and telephones and express letter service all available to cope with any emergency, there should be no need to keep the whole system of postal service at work on a day when every one was entitled to take a rest. The argument may or may not have been technically sound. It may be that capitalism and urban life as it is now constituted does involve an intensification of labor and a continuous working of the industrial machine which is incompatible with Christian teaching. It may be that for cities to continue as they are these things are necessary and that many other things much more flagrantly unchristian than Sunday postal services are indispensable conditions of what we know as civilization. But the French Catholic trade unions, taking their stand upon Christian principles, refuse to give way. They protest that there are certain fundamental rights in human life, certain fundamental

decencies which they will never let go without sustained resistance. And being logical Frenchmen they will resist to the end. This question of the postal deliveries is so small an issue that its very significance makes it all the more symbolic. But the Catholic trade unions refuse absolutely to submit to certain conditions, even though in any industrial country they may be regarded as essential.

In other and more far-reaching questions they may be expected to adopt a still firmer attitude. The whole trend of modern capitalism is towards overproduction in industry, towards overwork among men and women. If France is to hold her own industrially among the other nations she must be prepared to compete with them by accepting the same conditions of work. She must either be content to fill her countryside with grimy factories and to house her urban population in slums, or else she must confess defeat. And the question that in these matters must determine the future of France is whether or not the workingmen of the country are prepared to accept such conditions. Are they prepared to accept life in industrial areas at all, or will they persist in demands which are in terms of capitalism utterly unreasonable, like this insistence on regarding Sunday as essentially different from any other day of the week? If they are then it may safely be said that France has no industrial future, or at least that the labor which will work the French factories will have to come not from France but from other parts of Europe. No one can yet say what the future attitude of the French workingmen will be. But in so far as the Catholic trade unions are concerned it is clear already that for them capitalism in its present all-exacting form can never be acceptable, that so long as they remain steadfast to their present principles they

will have conflict after conflict with the capitalists who employ them. In some respects indeed they will be even less manageable than the revolutionary trade unionists, for the C.G.T. at least think primarily in terms of wages and of property and are prepared to order their lives in accordance with whatever system they can be persuaded is most suited to fulfill the needs of a frankly materialist philosophy.

Fundamentally in fact the Catholic trade unions in France are even more strongly opposed to modern capitalistic organization than are the Socialist trade unions. They have shown their power of constructive policy in various places, as at Fougères in Brittany, or at Grenoble or in Dauphiné, establishing coöperative factories of their own rather than go back to work on terms that they would never accept from their employers. Their attitude is always governed by an amount of caution which often appears to workingmen or to sympathizers with the labor movement as altogether excessive. But M. Zirnheld, the president of the Confederation, met this accusation finely in his speech at the congress in Paris last Whitsuntide, when he referred to the attitude of many employers who "regard the devout Catholic workingman as an ideal prey for their exploitation. They regard him as a good fool who is usually stupid and who has been so well brought up in ideas of discipline by his own Church that he can be counted upon to remain satisfied with his position and his wages, however small they may be." That is undoubtedly the idea held of Catholic trade unionists in many parts of France, and the general criticism that is brought against them by the intellectuals of the country. But the successes in raising wages, in subsidizing and prolonging apparently hopeless strikes which the Catholic unions have achieved are ample testi-

mony to their value to the class which they have arisen to assist. The fact remains that not only are the Catholic trade unions increasing their membership when trade unionism otherwise is literally dying out in France, but that no other trade unions have at any time had so much direct and effective influence upon Parliament or have worked together in such complete harmony.

CHAPTER VIII

FRENCH CATHOLICS AND THE DEPOPULATION MENACE

No other social or economic problem in France sends its roots so deep, or is so full of real danger for the future of the country, as is that of the steady decline in the French birth-rate. It is not surprising that on patriotic as well as on moral grounds the leading French Catholics are continually crying out against the evil results of the depopulation that has within a generation reduced the status of France almost to that of a second-rate Power, while all the other principal countries in Europe are rapidly outdistancing her. The war has in fact made the French birth rate a matter of immediate concern to the whole of Europe. For nothing gives more reality to the talk of a German war of revenge as soon as the period of chaos is over, than the knowledge that France, by the refusal of her people to increase the number of their children, is year by year losing her place among the other nations of the Continent. M. Clemenceau himself in a speech in the Senate in October, 1919, made the remarkable declaration: "If France refuses to have large families, it will not be of the smallest use to insert in the Peace Treaty the most perfectly framed clauses imaginable; you may seize every gun in Germany, you may do whatever you please, but France will have been lost, because there will be no Frenchmen left."

The statistics of France's steady retrogression in relation to the other great powers are very striking. Taking the year 1871 as a starting point, they show that between the end of the Franco-Prussian War and the year of the outbreak of the last war, the population of Germany had risen from roughly 41 millions to 68 millions, that of Great Britain from 27 to 42, that of Italy from 26 to 36, that of the United States from 39 to 99, that of Japan from 33 to 53, while the population of France, which had been 36 millions after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, had remained almost stationary, increasing only to 39 millions. Since the war, these totals and their relation to each other have altered considerably. The population of the United States has continued to increase at an amazing rate even in spite of the cessation of immigration from Europe, and in 1920 (the latest year for which complete comparative statistics are yet available) the American population was already at 108 millions, far ahead of all other powers. Germany which, in 1871 and still on the eve of the great war had a far larger man power than any other nation outside of the United States, still comes second on the list with a total of 60 millions, in spite of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and of the Polish provinces. Japan comes third with 58 millions, Great Britain fourth with 42 millions, Italy fifth with 39 millions, and France, which fifty years ago had a larger population than any other great Power but Germany and the United States, now comes last with 37 millions—a smaller population than before the war, even though she has regained Alsace-Lorraine in the interval.

So decisive a loss of ground in relation to the other countries would alone be serious enough, but the situation is in reality much worse than these statistics in-

dicate. The other great Powers are regularly increasing their population from year to year, while the population of France, having at last shown signs of a temporary recovery from its long decline, in reality seems likely to decrease still further at the end of a few years, or perhaps even sooner. What is still more alarming, there are reasons for believing that the decline will be constantly more rapid than in the past, if the social customs of the country are not revolutionized.

It is admitted on all sides that the root cause of France's failure to keep pace with the increase of population in other countries is her low birth-rate. There are ominous signs that this refusal to have large families, which has kept the population of France more or less stationary during the past fifty years, will in the future produce a positive decline which may gain momentum as the years pass. The death-rate in France is high, and a great deal is being done already to reduce it, especially among young children. But the same progress in the arts of medicine and hygiene which is helping to save the lives of infants in France is being applied to other countries as well, and the gain to the population in this respect cannot do more than keep pace with a corresponding gain elsewhere. Tuberculosis also, which is a serious factor in the death-rate in France, is being combated there as in all other countries, and so is the abuse of alcoholic drink, which is by no means a negligible factor. But these remedies for the high death-rate do not affect the main problem, which is simply the fact that the average number of children to each family in France has for years been becoming smaller. Is there any reason to believe that the size of the typical French family will be increased?

The annual total of births in France had fallen

steadily to little more than 900,000 in the eighties; it fell to about 850,000 in the nineties; to about 800,000 in the first decade of the century; and in the three years immediately preceding the great war it averaged under 750,000 a year. During those last years, the total of children born in Germany was more than double the number of French children. France's loss of ground in the race is thus easily explained, and the war has added in a frightful way to the loss that had thus taken place already before it. France lost nearly 1,400,000 men killed in battle, and at least as many more are maimed for life or made incapable, by illness or by the result of their privations in German prisons, of supporting families of their own. Apart from this loss directly attributable to the war, there is the enormous loss due to the falling off of the birth-rate in the war years. Before the war, the births had fallen to less than 750,000 a year, but during it they fell off to less than 400,000 a year. And even in the first year of peace the population declined to an alarming extent: the deaths in France in the year 1919 exceeded the births by a quarter of a million.

Since then there has been an appreciable recovery, and in the statistics for the following years a substantial increase in the population is recorded. In 1920 there was a total surplus of 160,000 births over the deaths, in 1921 there was a surplus of 117,000, and in 1922 a surplus of 70,000. Unfortunately almost the whole of this surplus is accounted for by the immense increase in the number of marriages since the war. In the eighty-seven departments other than Alsace-Lorraine there were 597,500 marriages in 1920, as against an average of 306,000 a year in the period just before the war. This total of nearly 600,000 marriages works out at a ratio of

159 for every 10,000 of the whole population, whereas the normal rate was roughly between 75 and 80 per 10,000 for the past century. Assuming that these early recent marriages nearly all produce children within the first year, the temporary revival in the birth-rate since the war is thus accounted for almost in full by the increase in the number of marriages. The excess of marriages over the average for normal years is so great that it leaves only the smallest margin in the statistics for an increased birth-rate among those who were married during and before the war; although it might reasonably have been assumed that a considerable number of those who were married before or during the war would have wanted to have at least one more child when they were able to resume their family life after it.

It cannot, therefore, be argued that France, like Ireland, has a low birth-rate because its marriage-rate is low. The marriage-rate after the armistice was higher than that of any belligerent country. Its ratio of 159 to 10,000 of the whole population is amazingly high even when compared with the corresponding rate for the same year of 101 in England and Wales, 96 in Scotland and in Holland, 88 in Denmark and 77 in Germany. Even in the year following the Franco-Prussian War the marriage rate rose to only 101. If these marriages could only be counted upon to be fruitful they would go a long way to repopulate France, even though the number of marriages has diminished very rapidly. It fell from 624,000 (including Alsace-Lorraine) in 1920 to 456,000 in 1921, and there were only 383,000 marriages in 1922. Even the second half of the year 1920 showed an appreciably smaller total of births than the first half, and the figures have shrunk rapidly since. All the signs now point towards a return to the

decline in the birth-rate which had been proceeding unbroken since the year 1831. The total of births has steadily declined in the past three years. It was 834,000 in 1920, as compared with 790,000 in 1913 (including Alsace-Lorraine); but there were only 813,000 births in 1921 and only 760,000 in 1922; so that the number of births last year was considerably smaller than before the war.

In the first thirty years of the last century the population of France steadily increased, and the average birth-rate from year to year was 32 for every thousand of the whole people. In the period between 1831 and 1851 the population for the first time began to decline in several districts, in the valley of the Garonne, in Normandy, and in the mountainous regions of the Center and the South. Eight departments in all were affected by this shrinkage, and the decline in them was sufficient to reduce the average birth-rate for the whole of France from 32 to 28.2 per thousand. In the next twenty years the ratio fell still further to 26.3 per thousand, and the decline spread to forty-nine departments. The areas affected included a wider range around the regions which had shown a decline in the previous twenty years, while it made itself felt also in the east. A decline, due largely to emigration into the towns, had also taken place in the Central Plateau, and in the regoins of the Pyrenees and of the Alps. The twenty years which followed the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War showed a certain measure of recovery, in so far as only forty departments were affected by the decline instead of the previous forty-nine, the drain due to emigration from the mountainous regions having more or less ceased; but the extension of birth-control in Normandy and in the valley of the Garonne was so rapid that the birth-rate per thousand

fell still further from 26.3 to 24.6. In the twenty years from 1891 to 1911 the decline spread with really alarming swiftness. Sixty departments were by now affected by it and the ratio per thousand fell from 24.6 to 21.4. The only departments which had remained immune from it were either those, like the industrial areas between Paris and the Belgian frontier and the north coast, which were constantly receiving an influx of workers from other parts of France or from abroad, or else those like Brittany and the region at the foot of the Pyrenees which had preserved a strong religious tradition, and in which the law which compels the subdivision of agricultural holdings did not operate. The net result of this steady decline in the birth-rate for eighty years had been to reduce the average number of children to each marriage from 4.5 in 1831 to 2.5 in 1913. In 1921 the average had fallen to 1.7 for every marriage, and although the ratio improved slightly in 1922 it was still less than two children to each marriage.

Such, therefore, is the present problem with which France is confronted in the face of her rivals all over Europe. Not only is she losing her former position of strength in regard to man power in the event of Germany's planning a future war of revenge, but she is already beginning to feel the paralyzing effect of a shortage of labor both in her industries and on the land. In all the devastated area of northern France at present a large proportion of the labor that is employed in rebuilding the ruins and restoring the land to cultivation is foreign labor. Everywhere in the devastated districts colonies of laborers from Poland, from the Baltic provinces and from across the Belgian border are doing the greater part of the work of reconstruction. And in agriculture the position is similar.

While the decline in the French birth-rate certainly cannot be attributed, as is the case in Ireland, to a low marriage-rate nor even to a custom of late marriages, it cannot be attributed either to racial sterility. There is no evidence to show that the French as a race have become incapable of producing large families, while there is definite evidence to the contrary, quite apart from the well-known fact that a great proportion of the country had adopted birth-control as a regular practice, to show that the low birth-rate could be increased at once if there existed the will to increase it. The late Dr. Bertillon in his book on "Depopulation in France," gives the results of an inquiry which he undertook among five hundred of his professional colleagues. One of them, whose evidence was typical of many others, told him that in a certain part of the valley of the Garonne it was already considered a disgrace for a woman to have a second child, while another doctor said that any man who has children is regarded with contempt by women as much as by men. M. Auburtin quotes an instance of a certain village in the South where, after an epidemic had caused the death of fifteen children in fifteen different homes, they were all replaced in the following year by new births in the same homes. One of the organs of the French repopulation movement, *Pour la Vie,* recently gave the instance of a small commune where within the past year there had been three marriages: in each case the bride had insisted beforehand on obtaining a promise from her husband that there were to be no children.

The causes of France's depopulation are well known. How far are they preventable? Economic forces which have gained new strength since the war have undoubtedly increased the practice of voluntary sterility in the urban centers, where the high cost of living—particularly in

the industrial northeast—has made it much more difficult for the laboring classes to support children. In his circular inviting delegates to attend the third National Birth-rate Congress in Bordeaux M. Auguste Isaac, deputy for Lyons and a former Minister of Commerce who has taken a leading part in the campaign to educate public opinion as to the danger to France's status in Europe if the country is not repopulated, explained that the aim of all social reformers must be to create such conditions of life as will enable ordinary men and women to have children "without requiring the exercise of a heroic virtue." The phrase is not too strong to describe the conditions in all the industrial towns of France, and it is even more applicable in England; and the acute shortage of houses has added enormously to the difficulties of the working classes, whose standard of living prevents them from even contemplating submission to the frightful conditions of overcrowding which the poor are willing to tolerate. The housing shortage has practically made the maintenance of large families an impossibility. It is not surprising that the working classes also are revolting against conditions which not only compel them to pay exorbitant rents but even drive them to pathetic efforts to conceal from their landlords the number of their children. Such conditions are indeed rarer in France than in England, although they are the rule in the great cities, but their effect in encouraging the habit of sterile marriages is already recognized with profound alarm.

France still remains, and is likely to remain, a predominantly agricultural country. More than 55 per cent of her people still live in rural communities, and of the few large towns that she possesses, fully half owe their prosperity to the fact that they serve as outlets or distributing centers for the agricultural products of the

surrounding country. Moreover France, in so far as she is an agricultural country, has prospered since the war and is at least not menaced by the uncertainty that must always darken the outlook of an industrial population. The cost of living in rural France is not so high, and can never involve the same degree of privation as among the people who live in large cities. Nevertheless, an extremely powerful economic factor has probably had more than anything else to do with the introduction of birth control in France. The movement began, as the statistics show, not in the industrial areas, but in the agricultural southwest, and it was directly due to a cause which legislation could easily remove. A senseless adaptation of the doctrine of "equality" to all political institutions led to the alteration of France's traditional system of hereditary law, and since the French Revolution, all estates must be equally divided between all the children of their proprietors. No measure could have struck so deeply at the roots of family life in agricultural France, and the result has been that wherever the law is applied in full force, the conservatism of the peasantry who have inherited their small properties intact for generations, has refused to allow any subdivision of the holdings upon which each succeeding generation has spent its life's work. M. Auburtin is so much impressed with the importance of this aspect of the question that he devotes the greater part of his book to a detailed analysis of the system of land-tenures in each part of France. His analysis of the statistics for each department shows that in those regions, as in Brittany and certain parts of the south, especially in mountainous Lozère, where the people have succeeded in maintaining the old custom of handing on their properties undivided to the eldest son, the birth-rate has invariably been higher than elsewhere in France.

A long succession of French writers and thinkers have denounced the subdivision of properties on this same ground. Le Play declared that it had "done more to weaken France than defeat in a hundred battles," and the same view has been eloquently urged by Comte, Balzac, Michelet, Montalembert, and a host of other Frenchmen who had wide experiences of French social problems. In twenty-five departments the struggle to resist the subdivision of properties which is compelled by the *Code Civil* has never ceased to continue with success. M. Auburtin concludes with the definite assertion that "the fall in our birth-rate is, above all, the response of agricultural France to the system of subdividing properties."

For the repeal of this part of the Civil Code, a long agitation has been conducted, and it is steadily gaining in strength. The four National Congresses of the Birth-rate which have been held since the war have all passed resolutions demanding a fundamental alteration in the law. A bill is now before the *Chambre des Députés,* sponsored by M. Isaac and M. Duval-Arnould, which proposes a reform of the law of inheritance, and which, while leaving entire freedom of choice to the testator, would allow him to bequeath two-fifths of his property to any one of his children. But hitherto all attempts to carry new legislation have failed. It is morally certain at least that an alteration in the hereditary laws would remove what is probably the most powerful economic factor that has helped to extend the practice of birth control in France. Other remedies, designed chiefly to relieve the sufferings of the urban population, have been urged, and in some cases adopted. Subsidies, on a very inadequate but unavoidably small scale, have been offered for the construction of houses to be available only for large families and for providing direct relief to large

families who are in want. All sorts of political remedies have been discussed, especially a remission of part of the military service period for the children of large families or those who become fathers of several children at an early age; the concession of several votes in the elections to parents of large families; and the lower scale of taxation for them. The most important privilege that has yet been given is the concession of heavy reductions upon railway-tickets for large families, rising to 70 per cent of the usual fare when there are seven children. To show its general sympathy with the demand for an increased birth-rate, Parliament has voted that all mothers of five, eight, or ten children should be given motherhood medals in bronze, or silver, or gold; but such measures border on the ridiculous.

The most effective encouragement to large families has been given by private people who have made yearly donations to assist deserving large families. M. Cognacq-Jay has given a magnificent endowment of four hundred fifty thousand dollars a year to provide ninety prizes, one for each department in France to the most deserving family with nine children, all of whom must be either still living or else have been killed in the war. The philanthropy of the same donors has created a number of extremely handsome foundations for various purposes in Paris—the outcome of the prodigious wealth they have amassed during the half-century since M. Cognacq-Jay started work in Paris as a friendless errand-boy, who eventually opened a small shop of his own with his young wife, which their combined thrift and industry has since developed into the colossal business of the *Magasins de la Samaritaine*. Early in 1922 they made a second munificent donation for the encouragement of large families —the gift of 25,000 francs a year each to twenty young

married couples who had three children before they reached the age of twenty-five. These two principal donations are made without any condition as to the religion of their recipients, the only stipulation being that the families who fulfill the necessary qualifications must be either "poor or in difficult financial circumstances" and that they must "show by the dignity of their lives that they are likely to make good use of these donations."

Some of the other similar donations by Catholic philanthropists specify that the families must be Catholic—as, for instance, the *"Fondation H. H. H."* which gives 5,000 francs a year to a "Catholic large family of French peasants." The *Fondation Étienne Lamy* offers two prizes of 10,000 and one of 20,000 francs for "families of French peasants who must be poor and Catholic, who have the most children and shall have proved themselves to be the most Christian in their faith and the most pure in their morals." The magnitude of such donations, even more than the conditions attaching to them, show how intense is the patriotism of these French Catholics. These donations are fairly numerous and have nearly all been given by devout patriots, in many cases with the special condition that they must be applied to families distingushed for their piety as well as their industry. A still more important encouragement has been given by employers, mostly devout patriots, who have agreed to pay additional wages to those of their workers who have large families. This initiative, coming from the side of the employers (and largely in response to appeals from the leaders of the patriotic revival) goes some way towards counteracting the disastrous effect in lowering wages that has been produced by the workers' own refusal to have children.

Unfortunately, however, all these proposed economic

remedies, even the proposal to restore the old hereditary law, fail to reach below the surface. Fifty years ago, such reforms would almost certainly have prevented or at least retarded the spread of the practice of birth-control, for they would have removed the economic motive which has become recognized all over France, tacitly and often openly, as the justification of family limitation. But in those past fifty years the habit of birth-control has become so widespread that it is now established as one of the most deeply rooted customs in the social life of France.

The late Professor Paul Bureau—whose sudden death is a sad loss to Catholic sociology in France—in his ruthlessly outspoken and solidly documented study on *"l'Indiscipline des Mœurs,"* refuses to regard any other aspect of the question as more than secondary to this main habit of selfishness and self-indulgence which he holds responsible for the entire decline in the population of France. Granted that his devastating analysis of the social tendencies of modern France is correct (and it is written in a spirit of intense patriotism in the belief that only by fearless candor can public opinion be aroused, and the truth honestly realized among Frenchmen at all costs, even though the process of exposure may discredit France abroad); then the individual motive for birth-control in each case is of minor importance. Whether it is due to a reluctance to subdivide farms or to live in an overcrowded tenement, or to sheer refusal to be troubled by children, the result is the same. He summarizes the whole problem as the outcome of a social system in which the following principles are all generally admitted: "Uncontrolled license for bachelors in the near future, for unmarried women, resting upon the aid of prostitution, of contraceptives and of abortion; marriage regarded

from a strictly individualistic point of view and relying, either for its support or for its dissolution at will as the case may be, upon the collaboration of abortion and adultery, or of divorce: all these practices, all these institutions are in fact interdependent parts of a perfectly coherent system, in which each part is enforced by all the others, and itself gives back to the whole the greater support because of the strength that it derives from the others. It is useless, therefore, to isolate any single part of the system, or to try a separate treatment for any one section of the appalling problem."

These strong words are the conclusion of an exhaustive analysis which ought to be read in full. But a few words must be said here regarding the evidence which he compiled concerning the spread of Malthusian practices, the amazing prevalence of abortion, and the rapid growth of divorce. M. Bureau describes the persistent efforts of the new Malthusian propagandist to increase among all sections of the people a knowledge of contraceptive practices, and shows what an immense commercial enterprise the production and sale of contraceptives has become. He gives the names of various important syndicalist organizations which have made Malthusian propaganda a regular part of their activity as trade unionist organizations, and as an instance of their success he quotes the cases of five industrial towns in which an intensive propaganda of birth-control has been undertaken (almost invariably during a strike or in some other circumstances when socialist feeling ran high) with calamitous results. Roubaix, in the industrial northeast, had 3,837 births in 1897; in 1908 the number had fallen, after a steadily progressive decline, to 2,568. In Tourcoing the number of births declined from 2,445 in 1898 to 1,675 eight years later. Fougères in eastern Brittany is a typical

small manufacturing town, whose population is continually being increased by immigration from the surrounding districts: but the number of children born there fell, year by year, as a result of birth-control propaganda, from 650 in 1903 to 409 in 1909. In the commune of Le Creusot there was a similar decline from 855 births in 1893 to 592 in 1904, although the people were increased by immigration. At Montceau-les-Mines the people were increasing rapidly from immigration, but the number of births fell off from 812 in 1899 to 386 in 1912.

There is no secret as to how this reduction in the birth-rate has been brought about. Although the French Parliament has since the war passed legislation forbidding every sort of direct Malthusian propaganda, the shop-windows in most of the large towns openly display contraceptive appliances of every kind. What is amazing in face of this universal prevalence of the knowledge of contraceptive methods is the extraordinary frequency of abortion throughout France. M. Bureau declares, after examining an amount of evidence which would appear to be irrefutable, that the knowledge of methods for producing abortion has become so widespread that it is performed as often as not by the persons concerned themselves, without even invoking the services of professional abortionists. It is obviously impossible to give any reliable statistics of the frequency of abortion in the whole of France, but M. Bureau estimates the number at somewhere about 300,000 abortions a year. In some parts of France medical evidence would suggest that the number of abortions actually exceeds the number of births. Professor Lacassagne, for instance, estimates that in Lyons the number of abortions every year is 10,000, as against an average of between 8,000 and

9,000 births. Dr. Robert Monin declares that there are 100,000 cases of abortion in Paris alone every year. If such figures are even remotely near the truth, we must accept Professor Bureau's statement that the discoveries of Pasteur in the science of antiseptics have in fact been utilized by a decadent society to provide a safe method of effectually defeating such accidents as contraceptive methods have not been able to avoid.

The divorce statistics of France, which have a direct bearing upon the birth-rate question, provide no relief from the revelations made by Professor Bureau. The pioneers of divorce in France used to maintain that the introduction of divorce legislation would in reality stabilize marriage as an institution, by clearing off quickly the accumulation of unhappy marriages, and by removing the grievances of the unhappily married. Alexandre Dumas *fils* and his colleagues in the agitation even declared that the number of divorces in France would decline almost at once after the first arrears had been cleared away. That plausible prophecy was completely falsified. In 1884, the year when divorce was first granted in France, the total of divorces was 1,657; in 1894 it had risen to nearly 8,000; in 1904 it was 11,000; in 1913, it was 16,335; and since the war the yearly total has nearly doubled. In 1920 the number of divorces granted was 29,156, in 1921 there were 32,557, and in 1922 there were 27,684. There were twenty departments in which the divorces amounted in 1920 to more than 90 for every hundred thousand inhabitants, the largest ratio of divorces being in the Aube, with 166 per 100,000; the great majority of these departments are in the north and northeast of France, which comprise most of the urbanized population of the country. Those departments in which there are fewest divorces form a number of

groups in different parts of the country, one being in Brittany, but the most important being in the center and southwest. It is impossible to draw any direct deductions from these figures, partly because they show no clear results and partly because the practice of divorce is only now becoming popular. But the evidence of learned sociologists like M. Auburtin and Professor Bureau confirms the perfectly obvious argument that an extension of divorce inevitably reduces the birth-rate, because people who enter upon marriage as a terminable contract are naturally more unwilling than are those who regard it as a contract for life, to encumber themselves with responsibilities that will impede their liberty of action afterwards.

The only real hope that exists in France of a return to the old tradition of large families consists in the religious revival which had already begun before the war and which has been undoubtedly strengthened and consolidated since. In an extremely interesting analysis of the French birth-rate statistics, M. G. Callon has made a detailed examination of the statistics for each department during the year 1920, which proves how closely the high birth-rate coincides with the preservation of the Catholic tradition in different parts of France. The aggregate birth-rate statistics showed a substantial increase during the year, though it had by no means kept pace with the extraordinary increase in the number of marriages in France after the war. But in the same year the birth-rate in England and Wales was 254 for every 10,000 inhabitants, in Denmark 281, in Holland and in Scotland 281, and in Germany 285, as compared with only 211 per ten thousand in France. Small as this French increase is, in contrast with the great increases in the other countries, it would have been much smaller if it had not

been for the Catholic provinces of France which have remained devoutly Catholic. Of the eighty-seven departments, twenty-one had the comparatively high birth-rate of more than 220 per 10,000 inhabitants, with a maximum of 288 in the very Catholic department of Finisterre. Twelve of these twenty-one departments form a more or less solid block in the Catholic northwest, including most of Brittany and western Normandy, while three of the others are situated in the industrial area of the northeast. On the other hand the twenty-three departments in which the birth-rate is lowest, all of them below 190 per 10,000, and with a minimum of 154 in the department of Gers, all belong without exception to the center and the south of France, where large families are very rare; and the principal group of these departments with low birth-rates is in the valley of the Garonne. It is of course futile to base any definite conclusions upon the statistics of one year, but M. Callon's analysis confirms the evidence that has been accumulating for years to show that the parts of France in which Catholicism has lost most ground are those which are most seriously threatened with depopulation, while those in which the Catholic tradition remains strongest are those which have preserved the highest birth-rate.

Monsieur Callon's analysis of the statistics for 1920 bears out very remarkably the results of the investigations which he published in a small volume in 1918.[1] In his previous study he found that, taking the birth-rate statistics for the five years before the war, the twenty departments which figured at the head of the list with the highest birth-rates were almost all those which are notoriously the most Catholic; and that among these twenty best departments there was at any rate not one which

[1] *L'Effondrement de la Natalité Française.*

could be described as being either hostile or even indifferent to the practice of religion. His investigation showed that, whereas certain departments which are well known for their Catholic piety do appear rather low down in the list, there was in almost every case some obvious explanation such as persistent emigration. His researches disclosed the fact that, even if all the religious departments were not among those with the highest birth-rates, at any rate those which had the highest birth-rate were almost all departments in which the practice of religion is very strong. M. Callon pursued his investigations still further in undertaking the laborious task of finding out as far as possible within each department how the birth-rate varied as between those cantons which were Catholic and those which were either indifferent or hostile. This involved an immense amount of research, and he succeeded in obtaining full returns for only sixty-seven out of eighty-seven departments. Nevertheless the results that he obtained covered so much of the country that they may be considered as typical of the whole of France. In the sixty-seven departments for which he was able to obtain sufficient information to tabulate the Census reports according to the religious tone of each canton, the birth-rate among the more Catholic population was higher than that of the less Catholic in sixty-two, and lower in only four, departments. The net result of his statistics, as summarized at the foot of an elaborate table, shows that in the sixty-seven departments for which information could be obtained, the total average birth-rate among the most Catholic districts was 212 per 10,000 inhabitants, and only 186 for those which were less Catholic.

The fact that the Catholic parts of France are those in which the fear of depopulation is least is so well-

known that it is generally admitted throughout France even by those who are least willing to acknowledge the existence of any higher standard of civic responsibility among Catholics. A paper so definitely anti-Catholic as *Le Radical* wrote not long ago on the question of depopulation—and the quotation could be paralleled from almost any other anticlerical organ in France—that "we must have the honesty to recognize that the real source of the evil does not consist in the difficulties of modern life. To bestow decorations on the mothers of large families, to give them money, to tax bachelors and childless marriages are all idle remedies. Have you ever taken the trouble to study on a map of France which are the districts in which children are most numerous? And among the middle-classes have you ever remarked which are usually the families that have most children? The brutal truth is plain enough to see—and I must take my chance of being stoned for telling the truth: the parts of France in which there are still most children are those which are generally described as the most "backward"—in other words, those which have remained devoutly religious. And the same is true of the middle-classes. Let this be a warning to us! The problem of the birth-rate is above all a moral question. It can be solved only in the light of the ideal which we set before ourselves, and in accordance with one's own conception of life and human responsibility."

But even more remarkable than these admissions in an anticlerical paper is the fact that the French Government has found itself obliged to recognize the national value of the large families of a Catholic province, in deliberately organizing a settlement of the depopulated southwest by subsidizing the migration of peasant families from Brittany to the region around Bordeaux, in the

valley of the Garonne. It was in this part of France that depopulation first set in, and it is worth while setting down the facts about the departments concerned, taking the departments in the order on the map. In the department of Charente-Inférieure the average annual birth-rate fell steadily from 293 per 10,000 inhabitants ninety years ago to 167 before the war; in Charente, from 272 to 172; in Dordogne, from 288 to 177; in Corrèze, from 334 to 180; in Cantal from 275 to 181; in Lot, from 266 to 147; in Lot-et-Garonne, from 239 to 136; in Gironde, from 271 to 147; in Landes, from 323 to 178; in Gers, from 239 to 130; in Tarn, from 310 to 160; in Tarn-et-Garonne, from 254 to 146; in Haute-Garonne, from 298 to 148. The result of this tremendous fall in the birth-rate is that the population is gradually disappearing from nearly all this part of France. Last year alone for instance, there were roughly three deaths for every two births in the department of Lot, and four deaths to every three births in Tarn-et-Garonne, in Gers, and in Haute-Garonne. Such is the situation which the younger sons of the large families in Brittany have been called upon to remedy. Most of them are, of course, landless men who have grown up on small farms along the rugged coast of Brittany, and even though land has sunk to a very low value in these depopulated districts around the Garonne, they cannot afford yet to buy their own holdings. Fortunately the old métayer system still remains in the southwest under which the landlord supplies the implements and the livestock and seeds and then shares the profits with the tenant, who merely contributes his own labor. The system suits admirably the needs of these agricultural laborers from Brittany, and they have been migrating there in considerable colonies, with the assistance of the Ministry

of Agriculture, and aided by grants from the local councils, who pay their expenses and give them small allowances to help them to establish their new homes.

It may be asked whether these colonies of Breton peasants and fishermen will be content to remain in a part of France which differs so much from their own in climate and in natural surroundings, or whether they also will gradually follow the drift away from the southwest which has accentuated the depopulation resulting from birth-control. The hot unchanging glare of the summer suns south of Bordeaux must at times seem to them suffocating as they remember the swiftly changing skies of western Brittany, where there is seldom a day even during the summer that rain does not fall. They will find it strange too to be surrounded by a country of old vineyards, and they will miss their orchards and their home-made cider. These solidly prosperous old vine-growers will think them outlandish people, with their mediæval traditions of merry-making on saints' days, with their extraordinary costumes which they are accustomed to wearing almost every day, and above all with their unintelligible Breton language, and the scarcely less comprehensible Breton accent of those who can speak French. But they have no alternative, for the present at least, to living where they have thus found everything provided for them, and where they have every prospect of eventually acquiring the land they begin to cultivate. Some of them may drift back to the life of the sea, but times are bad for the old fishing-fleets that used to spend half of every year around Iceland or moored off the sandbanks to the east of Newfoundland. The steam trawlers have made it impossible for them to maintain their old trade; for they get nearly all the fish, and they can come and go so much more quickly. The days of the *pêcheurs*

d'Islande are nearly finished, and though the Breton will always hanker after the sea, he is being more and more thrown back upon the land. And as a *terrien* his amazing industry and simple virtues should insure his prospering rapidly in a country where labor is desperately scarce.

Moreover these colonies of immigrants into the southwest have been organized on a scale sufficiently large to prevent them from feeling homesick or forlorn. A few months ago the Bishop of Quimper sent one of his priests down to Dordogne to accompany a new colony of settlers who were going south, and instructed him to report faithfully on the condition of those who had already established themselves there. In his report [2] he describes the devotion with which they all clamored for news of their old homes and how they used to accompany him as far as they could, harnessing the mare or ass they had brought from Brittany, to take him to the station or to the nearest Breton's house. "Their general condition," he declares, "is satisfactory, indeed excellent. There are a few families who went there without being adequately equipped for their undertaking, either because they had not collected sufficient capital to last them through the first year, or for want of sufficient labor, a few others whose courage failed them from the outset, or where one or other of the heads of the family has been addicted to drink. These have either given up their farms already or will have to leave them. But all the rest are well on the road to prosperity. In some cases where everything has not gone well, the fault is on the side of the landlords, and it is only a question of transferring them to another farm. All of them are counting upon finding their feet after the next harvest. They have dug the ground well, and have manured it heavily,

[2] Published in the *Nouvelliste de Bretagne*.

and are full of hope. Their fruit, their trees and their animals have all done well and, if things continue thus, the experiment will be a great success.

"Have they remained steadfast as Bretons?" continues this zealous ecclesiastic. "For the present at least there is no ground for fear on that score. They are still talking Breton everywhere. Their fields have all been christened with Breton names as though they were still at home. The oxen at the plow are beginning to respond to Breton exclamations, and the farmyard watch-dogs are bewildered at never hearing a word of the *patois* of Périgord. Friends of the Breton language, you need have no misgivings here! As for the métayer system, I found it to be the best possible scheme for making a start. Once these Breton peasants have grown accustomed to the country, to its climate and to its special cultivation, they will become independent farmers; whereas many of them must be bitterly regretting already that they insisted on their independence from the beginning. As for their religious practice, those who were devout Catholics before they left home remain so still; those who were neglectful before have not improved. In nearly all the families, every one, including the young children, goes to confession and to the general communion . . . Many of the parishes are without priests and in any case there are few with two masses on Sundays. The Catholic schools are very rare. There are not many fairs or markets; commerce is not easy, except in the immediate neighborhood of the towns. The houses are far from comfortable, with rare exceptions, but the barns and stables are immense; the interior of the house is very bare except for those who had the happy thought of bringing their furniture with them; among them one might fancy one's self back in Brittany. There have

so far been three deaths, including two children, and three marriages. I saw four Breton babies less than a week old. I visited in all 110 families, comprising 632 persons, and there were two other families whom I could not reach, and five other families have left their farms to go into the towns. In the department of Dordogne there are in all nearly 120 families, comprising between 650 and 700 Bretons."

This report was written late in 1922. Since then, the movement has progressed steadily. This picture of the gradual infiltration of Breton Catholic peasants, with their large families and their primitive ways, to take possession of the land that has had to be abandoned by a sophisticated people who have lost the faith without which no generation can even maintain its own numbers, may yet have a historical interest. For it is the record of the beginnings of a migratory movement that may in the end redeem France by repeopling her with a population that has lost neither the primitive virtues of a simple peasantry nor the living daily contact with the Church.

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